

THE
Episcopal
CHURCH

Epiphany 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I thank God for the witness of the clergy and people of The Episcopal Church as the faith we share expands hope through the various ministries of our parishes and institutions. As you read this I hope you take to heart how important your role is in bringing God's hope and peace to those whose lives you touch.

You may be aware that the theme of our recent House of Bishops meeting in September was Transforming Loss into New Possibilities. This theme continues to shape my prayers and thoughts of our ministry. The Church and the world are wrestling with many losses in terms of trust, hope, and opportunity as the world continues to polarize along economic, political, and religious lines. It is one thing to be comfortable at home musing over theoretical notions of transforming loss into new possibilities. It is quite something else to stand in solidarity with people who know loss at the deepest levels and who embrace that pain and loss yet do not descend into the abyss of hatred and resentment.

I continue to be inspired by the Christians who are a small fraction of the population of most of the nations throughout the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East. This past May I had the privilege of participating in a conference held in Beirut, Lebanon, sponsored by the WCC and the Middle East Council of Churches, which focused on the serious challenges facing indigenous Christians throughout that region.

Time and again in quiet conversation with Christian leaders and in public statements and presentations I witnessed the pain of loss expressed with passion and grief by so many on account of political and social pressures and the cycles of violence that continue in Syria, Israel/Palestine, and Egypt. While there was great sorrow expressed about loss, there was also great hope and expectation that peace and prosperity are possible.

Is it possible? In human terms, some doubt and wonder. In divine terms, I join our sisters and brothers of the Christian churches in the Middle East and say, "Yes, not only possible, but inevitable because it is God who has the last word."

I encourage you and your congregation to join in supporting our sister and brother Anglicans throughout the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East through the Good Friday Offering. Good Friday Offering materials will soon be available in English, Spanish, Chinese, and French: www.episcopalchurch.org/goodfridayoffering.

I am deeply grateful for your solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East.

Your support of the Good Friday Offering helps transform what is loss today into tomorrow's possibility.

I remain

Your servant in Christ,

Katharine Jefferts Schori
+KJS

The Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori
PRESIDING BISHOP AND PRIMATE

