



Most Reverend Michael W. Fisher
Bishop of Buffalo

July 7, 2021

Friends, Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Hello once again to all and thanks for taking a moment out of your day to join me for my weekly Journeys & Insights update.

I hope you had a wonderful and relaxing July 4th celebration and long weekend. As we continue to return to something resembling “normal” - it’s so good to be able to resume those traditions of our lives that bring us together - family and friends - to enjoy the civic, as well as religious, celebrations that commemorate those larger events that give meaning to our lives. Of course, with the celebration of Independence Day, we recall the hard won struggle for freedom and self-determination at our nation’s birth - as well as the courage that it required to assert that desire for self-governance, which came at a great cost to those early Americans and which is ours to safeguard in our own day and time.

But even as we honor our nation’s heroic past, we must be mindful of the struggles that continue - our need to be vigilant and unyielding in pursuit of the rights and freedoms of all. I cannot help but speak out about the extreme level of violence that our community has been experiencing recently. The gun violence that has taken so many lives and terrorized neighborhoods and families is unacceptable and a grave violation of the rights of all to live in peace and not in fear for their lives. Fear is indeed among the greatest threats to freedom and the casual disregard for the sanctity of life among those who resort to settling disputes with lethal violence is something we must condemn in the strongest terms possible. I ask you to join me in praying for - and working toward - an end to these tragedies. We cannot look the other way nor become complacent merely because such severe violence has become routine. We must also pray for those in law enforcement who are sworn to protect and serve, for their safety and ability to bring those responsible to peaceful justice.

In the readings of this weekend, we are reminded that God has called us as his own - and summoned us to go out into the world to proclaim the Gospel of his Son Jesus Christ. The letter to the Ephesians makes clear: *“In him we were also chosen, destined in accord with the purpose of the One who accomplishes all things according to the intention of his will, so that we might exist for the praise of his glory, we who first hoped in Christ.”*



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And then, in Mark's Gospel, we recount how the first Disciples were instructed to venture out in total reliance on God and the goodwill of those who would receive them:

“Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits. He instructed them to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick— no food, no sack, no money in their belts. ...So they went off and preached repentance. The Twelve drove out many demons, and they anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.”

In these days of summer when we hope to slow down our routine, relax and again enjoy being together for cookouts, reunions, sporting events and other leisure, We must bear in mind and hold in our hearts those who face tragedy and suffering. We continue to follow the terrible tragedy in Surfside Florida which claimed so unsuspectingly the lives of residents of the collapsed condominium and the terrible grief endured by their loved ones. We commit them to the loving and consoling embrace of God in these very difficult days.

Whenever and however we can, we must be instruments of the Lord's grace, remembering always that “In him we were chosen, destined in accord with the purpose of the One who accomplishes all things according to the intention of his will.”

Thanks so much for allowing me to share with you - please know of my prayers for you and your loved ones, and may the Lord make known his constant presence among us - always and in every place.

God's abundant blessings on you and all those whom you love!

Sincerely in Christ,

+ Bishop Mike