



The Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina | The Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina

A word of encouragement to members of the LGBT community and their allies

March 23, 2015

Dear brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, friends and neighbors,

We greet you in the name of Jesus Christ. This being Holy Week, Christians are keenly aware of Jesus' journey to the cross. This is a journey in which our Lord experienced in mind, body and spirit misunderstanding, hostility and rejection by the religious and political authorities of his day. Jesus' way of identifying himself as the Son of God was deeply threatening and confounding to those whose own hearts and minds were staked upon preserving a self-serving status quo of tradition and power.

Today our hearts are grieved by the actions of the North Carolina General Assembly which, we believe, far from protecting public safety, actually contribute to prejudice and misunderstanding toward our neighbors whose gender identity is more complicated than the simple matter of anatomy. We salute the courage of those who have to navigate such a complicated matter in such public ways. Their honesty and integrity is in deep contrast to the very real and present danger of sexual predators who are often very difficult to recognize for all their seemingly average citizen behavior.

Many of us, maybe all of us, at one time or another have been guilty of blindness to God's radical love and welcome to all. We are all sinners in the eyes of God and in need of forgiveness as well as a new heart and a right spirit within us. As we prepare to welcome the happy morning of Jesus' Resurrection and the invitation to eternal life, we, the Bishops of North Carolina will continue to walk with you who seek justice, show mercy and walk humbly with God.

Yours faithfully,

The Right Reverend Anne E. Hodges-Copple,
Bishop Diocesan Pro Tempore, Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina

The Right Reverend Robert Skirving
Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina

The Right Reverend James Peter Lee
Assisting Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina

