



International Communion of the Charismatic Episcopal Church

Patriarch Craig William Bates

50 St. Thomas Place, Malverne NY 11565



The Feast of Our Lord the Giver of Life 2019

Dear brothers and sisters,

As I am writing this letter, the news is consumed by and obsessed with a “caravan” of persons from Latin America seeking to enter the United States. Whether they are fleeing from poverty or from violence or both, they envision a new and better life for themselves and their families by crossing the border between Mexico and the United States. It doesn’t matter whether we call them refugees, aliens, legal, illegal, or asylum seeking. It doesn’t matter whether they are male or female, older or younger -- they are, in many ways, the face of the poor.

I refuse to enter into the discussion of how to resolve the issue on the United States border. I pray for the government officials of Mexico and the United States hoping they will see in these people a desperate humanity and respond with compassion and mercy, rather than using them as political pawns in the next election cycle. I pray for an end to fear.

The plight of the refugee or the migration of ethnic groups is not something unique to the United States border with Mexico. I have walked through refugee camps in Africa. Some of the camps have existed for 30 years. Even today there are refugees fleeing civil war and unspeakable violence in parts of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. I have listened to women who have held starving and dying children in their arms because the governments are holding back basic necessities as a means of war.

The majority of the world is hungry and without basic needs. Most children will not receive healthcare or an education. Poverty gives birth to crime, addiction, and prostitution. Poverty causes parents to sell their pre-adolescent sons and daughters to sex traders so the other children in the family can have a shelter over their heads or enough cash to buy seeds to plant.

I could go on and on about the plight of the poor and the large gap between the world’s rich and the world’s poor. And, I could also talk about the thousands upon thousands of people who are deeply distressed by any number of these concerns and have given generously, and continue to give generously, to alleviate poverty. There are people who have been motivated to spend their lives ministering to the poor, and I pray for them.

I am also concerned about the violence in our cities (and even outside the city). The fear that has been created by mass shootings is of particular concern. I can’t imagine the pain of parents who have lost a child in either a drive-by shooting or at the hands of an armed mentally ill person walking into a school and shooting innocent children.

The inner cities of the United States, but also around the world, are in the midst of a pandemic of opiate addiction. The death rate from addiction has increased dramatically. Prisons are overflowing with young men and women incarcerated for drug-related crimes. I know the plight of parents who cry themselves to sleep because the baby they once held in their arms now lives on the streets, stealing money or selling their bodies to obtain drugs. Every day the people dealing with recovery are aware that addiction is a life and death issue.

I could go on and on writing about the suffering of persons around the world, particularly the poor. And, I am thankful that many from all political and religious backgrounds are working to resolve some of these issues. But there is one group of persons who are victims of the most horrific procedure ever imagined in the history of mankind. ABORTION. Worldwide, over 150,000 children are aborted every day. That is just short of 56,000,000 children a year -- nearly the population of California and Texas combined. In the United States, more than 1,280,000 children are killed by abortion every year. That is larger than the population of most cities in United States. These children, made in the image of God, are sacred.

These murders are not only happening in distant countries, or in civil-war-torn areas dominated by corrupt governments; they are happening within driving distance of most American or European homes. These children are the silent victims of a culture of death consumed by materialism, hedonism, and greed. A culture that is ready to blame children -- innocent preborn children -- for poverty and the results of poverty around the world. These children are a

victim of a culture that has convinced women in the West that their freedom and civil rights hang on their freedom to murder their own offspring.

How are we to resolve the problem of immigration, the plight of the poor, the gun violence in schools and on the street, the senselessness of civil wars, the sexual exploitation of children, the lack of adequate healthcare around the world, or the destruction of the family if we cannot end the horror of a child burned and mutilated in her mother's womb? We will never see the face of Christ in the poor unless we see Him in the womb of Mary and hold Him in the manger of our hands at the Eucharist.

CEC for Life alone is not going to end abortion. However, CEC for Life is *our voice* in the wilderness. Fr. Terry Gensemer and Sarah Howell have traveled around the world speaking to Bishops, clergy, churches and particularly young adults about the sacredness of life, particularly the preborn, and how to impact their own churches, communities and nations for life. Many of these young adults are now committed to giving their entire lives to ending the holocaust of abortion.

I don't like writing this letter. I don't like praying in front of abortion mills. I don't like talking about abortion. I don't like hearing the pain and shame of women who have had abortions, or men who have participated in abortion. I pray daily for an end to abortion so that this horror will end in my nation and around the world.

Every January, on the Sunday closest to January 22nd, we celebrate the Feast Day of Our Lord the Giver of Life. On that day, every church in the ICCEC is asked to take up an offering and send it to CEC for Life. It is also the time when every church and every clergyman renew their membership in CEC for Life, and every layperson is asked to partner with CEC for Life through a one-time donation or monthly pledge. This allows our pro-life ministry to continue, and we remain part of the increasing number of persons calling for an end to abortion. We cannot remain silent while the screams of the unborn go unheard.

The 2019 Feast Day takes place on Sunday, January 20th. Please take the time to pray and to give. Your giving has done and will continue to do so much.

Under His mercy,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig W. Bates". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a cross at the beginning.

The Most Rev. Craig W. Bates
Patriarch, ICCEC