



January 13, 2021

Dear St. Thomas More Community,

January 6th was a sad day in the history of our nation as we witnessed the violence that took place at the U.S. Capital Building. Who of us could have imagined something like that taking place in our country? In responding to the attack, Archbishop Jose Gomez, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops wrote: *I join people of good will in condemning the violence today at the United States Capitol. This is not who we are as Americans. I am praying for members of Congress and Capitol staff and for the police and all those working to restore order and public safety. The peaceful transition of power is one of the hallmarks of this great nation. In this troubling moment, we must recommit ourselves to the values and principles of our democracy and come together as one nation under God. I entrust all of us to the heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. May she guide us in the ways of peace, and obtain for us wisdom and the grace of a true patriotism and love of country.*

Just like in any family, community, church, or nation, disagreements and diverse viewpoints will be shared. There will be people with viewpoints that are radically different. However, we must deal with differences in a way that is civil and respectful. We must always act in a way that promotes the common good. The common good is the core of Catholic Social Teaching. Pope St. John XXIII, in the Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes*, defined the common good as “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily.” We must always keep this principle in mind as we work for a more just society.

Last week, we witnessed violence and anger surge to a new level. Violent behaviors can never be a response to disagreement. In these turbulent times, God is calling us to see through His lens of love. We must set aside our political, social, and emotional lenses and see as God sees. When people riot on the streets or turmoil embroils a community out of fear, rejection or anger, we must see through His lens of love.

Love is key. Perhaps what we witnessed last week and what we have witnessed in the many examples of civil unrest and violence in cities across our country over the last year is a failure to love God and love others. The Apostle John tells us “*whoever lives in love, lives in God, and God in him*” (1 John 4:16). That tells us that anything not done in love, is not done in God.

I know that the issues facing our nation are complex and must be addressed on multiple levels. My job, though, in all of this is to keep reminding you of the greatest commandment: love God and love others. Without love, every effort we make will fall flat and may do damage.

What would do all of us good is to take the time to pray. In our prayer, let us ask God to forgive our own failings to love and to give us a greater desire to understand one another. Let us pray for our nation, which has witnessed so much unrest in the past year, and for our elected leaders. Let us also pray that we may have the ability to love well and always act in the interest of the common good.

In His Love,

Very Rev. Scott E. McCue, V.F.
Pastor