



The Episcopal Diocese of Long Island

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Message to the Diocese and Especially Immigrant Families
from Bishop Lawrence C. Provenzano About Suffolk County Political Activity
Posted Apr 13th, 2016

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I write to you as a follower of Jesus Christ, a bishop of the Church, and a child of an immigrant family.

I write to assure you that in the face of the reckless and hateful attitudes portrayed by some in this political season, there are many more people of good will and faith that stand with you against the toxic, irresponsible rhetoric of some of the candidates for president.

Specifically, you should know that the planned fundraiser by the Republican Party in Suffolk County featuring Donald Trump, just yards away from the scene of the 2008 murder of Marcelo Lucero, will not go unmet by people of prayer and good will.

As a person responsible for the care of God's people, I want you to know that we in the diocese understand what a difficult and scary time this is for each of you and your families. That is why I am asking the clergy and people of the Diocese of Long Island to join me in prayer and witness against the evil that once visited itself upon the Town of Patchogue, and is now threatening a return by the calculated and disgraceful plan to have this event at the very site of this hate crime in which young, white, high-school boys were encouraged to act in violence by the anti-immigration rhetoric of some of the then-elected officials.

The same mistakes cannot be repeated. We cannot and will not allow another season of violence to be initiated for the gain of some seeking political office.

Some may want to say that my call to witness and prayer is a violation of the separation of church and state. Let me be clear then, my focus is not the political process or the endorsement of any candidate, but rather the exercise of my role as a bishop of the church, to protect God's people and especially those in my diocese.

(Continues...)

It is my job to oppose evil, ignorance, and sin. This planned "political event" in Patchogue meets all three criteria. Either the organizers are ignorant of the days when there appeared to be open season on immigrants—especially day-workers and their families—or the entire event is designed to reignite the hatred that existed and use it for political gain. Either way, you should know that the church stands with you. And we will continue to stand with you, as in the past, against the ignorance and violence of those who focus on hate and seek to draw others into their fear of people who are different from themselves.

In Jesus Christ we are all one body, brother and sisters of each other. United we will face the ignorance of those who seek to divide us in fear. Together we will build bridges of love and acceptance, not walls of fear and intolerance. Together we will seek to respect and admire the differences that make us unique children of God and build a community in which all are seen as equal and all know the dignity that is incarnate in our humanity.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lawrence C. Provenzano". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial 'L'.

The Right Reverend Lawrence C. Provenzano
Bishop of Long Island