



## United Independent Catholic Church

### Office of the Presiding Bishop

Deus caritas est:

Dear Members and Friends of the United Independent Catholic Church:

God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him. I remember when I memorized that scripture passage. I was thirteen years old in Sunday school. I would venture to say that every child who went to Sunday School memorized this passage. Yet I wonder if we really understood the implications of this scripture passage of 1 John Chapter 4, Verse 16. Jesus gave us a commandment that we love one another. He did not equivocate.

Yesterday we witnessed the horror of mass murder in the gay community of Orlando, Florida. Even now it is hard for me to wrap my mind over the senseless murder of innocent people because they were gay. The man who committed this murder was obviously troubled and yet claimed to be a Muslim. The three Abrahamic Faiths proclaim love to be the binding force of its beliefs. There was no love there. Instead, there was hatred and revulsion for someone who was different. The key element there was hate. Where did that hate come from? What was its binding force that caused a man to kill people that he did not know?

A co-worker asked me today what I thought of what happened in Orlando. The first word out of my mouth was not a succinct political diatribe against other people or that person in particular. I said "Hate". When I said that such pain entered my heart and it was hard not to cry. People are taught to hate and then use it to engender fear and anger. We hear it every day on political news bites, we hear it every Sunday when we hear preachers talk about various groups that do not conform to their form of loveless and uninformed Christianity.

We are reminded every day of who our enemies are and that we are supposed to fear them and hate them. True, those who remind us of who to be afraid of do not say the word hate; we know what the meaning is. Hate can be so subtle and smooth that we at times miss the implication of what has been said. But those of us who follow Christ are called to understand that "There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment, and so one who fears is not yet perfect in love." (1Jn vs18)

Fear and hate are the enemies of our country. How do we respond to this? What do we do to combat this? What are we called to do in order to make our country a place where Justice and Peace shall embrace? Do we sit back and let other people do the heavy lifting? No! We are better than this. We stand for what is right. We challenge injustice and bigotry where we find it and we teach our children positive values that contribute to a great country. Those of us who are followers of Christ own the fact that anyone who says, "I love God," but hates his brother, is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God\* whom he has not seen. (1Jn 20-21). It is that simple.

Friends, I implore, you in the name of Christ, to take a stand against hatred and fear. Confront gently and do not be cowed by a vocal minority. Get involved in the political process and be counted. Let Orlando be our rallying cry and source of purpose.

Sincerely,

+Jerry  
Servant