

A Call to Solidarity: Towards Positive Peace

As religious leaders serving the Sarasota community, we unite in this moment to voice our shared commitment to justice and the inherent dignity of all people. Rooted in our shared moral and spiritual values, we stand united against policies that directly threaten the safety, inclusion, and flourishing of all, especially our LGBTQ+ siblings and immigrant neighbors.

The administration has called for unity, yet its actions tell a different story. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote in his *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, true & positive peace is not found in “the absence of tension” but in “the presence of justice.” We cannot accept policies that harm the vulnerable under the guise of making America great. A society built on exclusion cannot claim peace—it can only sow discord. Positive peace, on the other hand, requires that we show mercy, uphold justice, and defend the dignity of all people.

This call to action is especially urgent in the face of policies that deny the humanity of so many. The declaration that “there are only two genders: male and female” erases the lived realities of transgender and non-binary individuals, denying their humanity and fostering exclusion and harm. Aggressive immigration measures, such as the reinstatement of the “Remain in Mexico” policy, and heightened ICE militarization, tear apart families and perpetuate fear within immigrant communities. The blanket suspension of all programs of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion enforced by blatant threats directly encourages a normalization of racism. These actions are antithetical to our moral and faith principles, which affirm and honor the dignity of all, compel us to be beacons of love, and seek to protect the most vulnerable.

To our immigrant and LGBTQ+ neighbors: know that you are not alone. We stand with you, affirming your humanity and advocating for your safety and rights. Your lives matter deeply—to us, to this community, and to the sacred values we hold dear. Even in these challenging times, we urge you to hold onto hope, for hope is the seed from which justice and transformation grow.

To our broader Sarasota community: we invite you to join us in this work. True peace requires all of us to take a stand against injustice and to work toward a society where every person is valued. Whether you are a person of faith or not, your voice matters. Together, we can cultivate a Sarasota that embodies compassion, equity, and inclusion—a Sarasota where everyone can thrive.

Dr. King reminds us that “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Our destinies are bound together, and the path to true peace is paved with justice and the

recognition of our shared humanity. Let us build a community that reflects the best of our shared values: one of compassion, inclusion, and positive peace.

Signed by,

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