



Pastoral Letter on the Commemoration of the Martyrs of the Reformation Era

5 May 2023

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

500 years ago, the church was deeply divided over issues of theology. The Reformation was in full swing, and it seemed that all of Europe was aflame with these new teachings. Because of the division between the Protestants and Catholics executions of Protestants and Catholics alike were taking place at the hands of the opposing churches. Unfortunately, these divides continue to this day, and while we are not executing our fellow Christians, we are still guilty of causing them hurt.

I am a proud son of the English Reformation. As a priest and now as Bishop Elect, I am fully committed to the work of Thomas Cranmer as found in the Book of Common Prayer and in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion. I am Anglican through and through. But just as I am committed to my Anglican heritage I too am just as committed to bringing unity to the church.

In a few short months my Episcopal Ordination and Consecration will take place in Ohio. To prepare for this I have been studying the role of a bishop. In my studies there is a reoccurring theme that I am coming across and that theme is unity. In the *Common Worship Ordinal*, the bishop elect is asked, "*Will you promote peace and reconciliation in the church and in the world; and will you strive for the visible unity of the church?*" As bishop one of my principal responsibilities is to be a symbol of unity both in the diocese and in the world.

Seven years ago, upon my ordination to the sacred priesthood, my priestly coat of arms was commissioned. For it I was asked to select a motto, the motto I selected is the Latin phrase "*Caritas Domi Exoritur*" or Charity Begins at Home. This phrase is an ever-constant reminder of my role as a priest, and now bishop, and our roles as members of Christs one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church to always live in a spirit of charity toward one another. Because it is living in this spirit of charity that we all can play a part in bringing unity to the church, both in the diocese and in the world.

Your Servant in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. E. W. +", is located at the bottom left of the page.