

February 18, 2011

Dear Friends in Christ,

Over the last few days we have witnessed freedom and democracy at work around the world. I am pleased to report to you that our friends in our former companion diocese of Egypt are safe and that the missionaries of The Episcopal Church serving in Egypt are continuing their ministry in that place. I know you will join me in continuing to hold the people of Egypt and the rest of the Middle East in your prayers.

This past week we have also seen democracy at work in Wisconsin as thousands gathered in Madison in response to the Governor's Budget Bill. Regardless of our individual positions on the bill before the Legislature and what steps are necessary to build a stronger and better Wisconsin, I believe we can all agree that our baptismal vow to "respect the dignity of every human being" is not served by a majority simply pushing through legislation because they have the votes necessary to do so. As Christians, it is our duty and call to make sure that everyone has a place at the table and every voice has the opportunity to be heard. Respecting the dignity of every human being requires taking the time to have honest and faithful conversation that respects the rights and freedoms of all.

We also are called to speak on behalf of the sick, the poor, the elderly, orphans, widows, and all those who live in the margins of our society. Matthew in his Gospel reminds us that in serving these we are serving the Lord Jesus himself. It would be a sin to balance our state budget on the backs of those who have the least.

As your bishop I ask you to do two things. First, contact your representatives and invite them to true leadership by taking the time to listen to the voices of all and provide a guarantee that the voices of all will be heard in the future. Secondly, pray for elected officials daily, by name. Leading is a difficult task that requires the prayer support of many. I know that I could not lead this diocese without the prayers of each of you.

May God continue to bless us his people that we may be a witness to the world.

Yours in Christ,

The Rt. Rev. Steven A. Miller
Bishop