



To Cardinal Blase J. Cupich
Archbishop of Chicago

Dear Brother,

Please convey to the people of Chicago that they have been on my mind and in my prayers. I know that many families have lost loved ones to violence. I am close to them, I share in their grief, and pray that they may experience healing and reconciliation through God's grace.

I assure you of my support for the commitment you and many other local leaders are making to promote nonviolence as a way of life and a path to peace in Chicago. You are marking that effort by inviting people of goodwill to walk for peace on Good Friday in areas afflicted by violence. As I make my own Way of the Cross in Rome that day, I will accompany you in prayer, as well as all those who walk with you and who have suffered violence in the city.

Sadly, as you have told me, people of different ethnic, economic, and social backgrounds suffer discrimination, indifference, injustice, and violence today. We must reject this exclusion and isolation, and not think of any group as "others," but rather as our own brothers and sisters. This openness of heart and mind must be taught and nurtured in the homes and in schools.

Walking the path of peace is not always easy, but it is the only authentic response to violence. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, humanity "must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love".

I urge all people, especially young men and women, to respond to Dr. King's prophetic words—and know that a culture of nonviolence is not an unattainable dream, but a path that has produced decisive results. The consistent practice of nonviolence has broken barriers, bound wounds, healed nations—and it can heal Chicago.

I pray that the people of your beautiful city never lose hope, that they work together to become builders of peace, showing future generations the true power of love.

I ask you to pray for me too.

From the Vatican, 4 April 2017

Francis