



## A PASTORAL LETTER TO THE DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH The Feast of Pentecost in the Year of Our Lord 2020.

To read from all pulpits.

*May the God of hope fill us with all joy in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit.*  
(ROMANS 15:13)

It is with great humility and joy that we receive the ruling of the Texas Supreme Court in the lawsuit against our Diocese by The Episcopal Church.

The court has ruled unanimously in our favor. At the conclusion of any appeals that may be filed by The Episcopal Church, the mandate will be sent back to the District Court to be executed.

It is a time to thank God for His provision and protection during this long spiritual and legal battle. I also want to thank the Supreme Court Justices for their service; our legal team, Scott Brister, Shelby Sharpe, and David Weaver; and finally, Bishop Iker for his steadfast endurance and defense of the Gospel.

At this time of solemn rejoicing, we need to remember that the Church has never been the buildings or property. The Church is the Body of Christ: the followers of Jesus gathered together faithfully in Word and Sacrament. And yet our Lord, in His Incarnation, came to us in physical matter. Sacred Spaces are important tools to help us worship our Lord and make disciples for Him.

We are called to stand firm (Ephesians 6) and to hold fast to the faith once delivered to the Saints (Jude 1). We are called to continue to proclaim the unchanging Gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the same, yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13).

In the end, the ruling makes no difference, if we are not willing to disciple the next generation by carrying out the work of the Great Commission. The challenge we face today, in an increasingly pagan and secular society, is to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in every way that we can.

Today, we must leave behind the fortress mentality, look beyond the walls of our buildings, and be about the work of the Gospel. We need to shed the spiritual weight from this 11-year-long lawsuit and recommit ourselves to sharing the transforming love of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, I call all of us on this Feast of Pentecost to

### **A Day of Repentance and Rededication.**

I ask that this letter be read in all of our congregations. Following this letter, I am asking each congregation to pray through the Litany of Penitence as an act of corporate repentance. We will then rededicate ourselves to the work of the Kingdom, in the renewal of our baptismal vows. The Litany and Renewal may be used in place of the Nicene Creed and the Prayers of the People today. If baptisms are taking place, please begin with the Litany of Penitence.

In the Litany of Penitence, let us repent of any evil thoughts or malice toward those who chose to sue us rather than negotiate a settlement. Let us repent of thoughts of vengeance toward the “other side” and uncharitable thoughts regarding those who

differ with us. Let us repent of any spirit of triumphalism. And finally, let us repent for any ways that this lawsuit has kept us from witnessing to the transforming love of Jesus Christ.

In the renewal of our baptismal vows, let us rededicate ourselves to holiness of life and good works, thus proving ourselves to be disciples of Jesus and bringing glory to our Father who is in Heaven. Let us recommit ourselves to faithfulness to the truth of the Holy Scriptures and the saving message of the Gospel. Let us make sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ the first priority in our lives, as we continue to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.

We celebrate today not because we won in court, but because God provides for his people and wants the best for us. Therefore, let each of us walk faithfully in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit and for the purposes to which He has called us. Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father except through Him. (John 14)

Alleluia, Christ is Risen.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Ryan S. Reed". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

The Rt. Rev. Ryan S. Reed  
IV Fort Worth

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Litany of Penitence: BCP 2019 pg. 547; BCP 1979 pg. 267

Renewal of Baptismal Vows: BCP 2019 pg. 194; BCP 1979 pg. 416