

Courage is a Response to Fear

Dear Beloveds,

In these last three weeks, I have struggled with what to say or write. Part of this struggle has been trying to keep my thoughts succinct, but I believe you deserve to read them in full.

I sat down to write something many times since the murder of Renee Nicole Good. I've started and stopped. Revised and waited. I see that three weeks have passed. As I waited for eloquence to come to me, another person, Alex Petti was executed by our government. Sandwiched between these murders countless injustices have occurred such as the physical and emotional harm inflicted on children ranging from 6 months old to 5 years old, to high school age – tear gassing, abduction to detention centers, harassment and bodily, physical tackling by agents of the state who have sworn to uphold the U.S. Constitution. Those who have been spared, physically, have been made to endure the cruelty of watching this violence unfold, watching their classmates go missing, watching families torn apart.

Before Renee Good, there was Keith Porter, a Black man, shot and killed by an off-duty ICE officer whose death has been conspicuously absent from mainstream media coverage. Yet, this is not unusual in this country where Black life has always been seen as less valuable than white life.

In this time, I signed on to two letters in support of the people in Minneapolis, that condemn the actions of ICE, the execution of Renee Nicole Good, the government's actions in Minneapolis, and calling for the end to the occupation and targeting of that community. These letters were the result of the community organizing efforts of Faith in Action and the Minneapolis

federation of the same. With my signature, I joined hundreds of faith leaders across the country. But I know this is not the same as offering a word to help people make sense of this moment.

I know you want me to provide a word of comfort, to tell you that all will be well. Having no platitudes or reassurances to offer, I have hesitated to write. Would it be enough to simply say, I know this is terrifying and should not be happening, hold on to your faith because we'll need it to get through these times? You want me to tell you not to be afraid. I know you want me to remind you of the love of Jesus and to be hopeful.

The love of Jesus leads us to speak truth to power, in as much as it compels us to speak the truth to those whom we love and are responsible for. I have always told you the truth, even when it is difficult to tell or to hear.

There is little to offer in the way of comfort right now. The comfort that does exist though, is seen in the thousands who participate in planned and spontaneous demonstrations. They, after seeing that it could cost them their lives, were not deterred. They have continued to resist and to protect their neighbors, with their own bodies and voices. This is a display of Jesus' justice and love.