



## THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MISSOURI

1210 Locust Street | St. Louis, MO 63103 | 314-231-1220 | [diocesemo.org](http://diocesemo.org)

### Office of the Bishop

*"As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."* –Galatians 3:27-28

Dear Siblings in Christ,

As followers of Jesus Christ we believe that in Holy Baptism each person is named, claimed, and proclaimed as Christ's own forever and marked by the Holy Spirit as a beloved child of God. Ours is a faith that seeks to serve Christ in all persons and that strives to respect the dignity and worth of every human being. We are therefore connected by God's grace, by a common thread of love that goes beyond age, race, gender, orientation, expression, ability, or anything that would separate us one from another.

In recent weeks several bills have been introduced into the legislative process in Missouri and other states that unjustly target the dignity and worth of our transgender siblings. These bills seek to prohibit the full inclusion of transgender children and youth participation in sports, restrict open education that encourages respectful learning about the diversity of human sexual orientation and identities, and prevent affirming medical treatment for individuals who are transgender.

These bills are not about abstract principles but have substantial and life threatening consequences for families who pray, worship, and serve in our communities of faith across the Diocese and around the state. We would all be severely diminished as people of faith and citizens of this state if these bills to become law.

I firmly believe that injustice and intolerance against transgendered persons is an affront to God's will for all people to walk in love as we have been made one with Christ. I therefore stand unequivocally beside our transgender siblings in support of honoring every person's value and worth. I invite you to join me in opposing any measure, law, or legislation that would discount, disparage, or demean their worth as bearers of the Divine image and likeness.



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As people of faith and followers of Jesus, we have varying beliefs and understandings of sexual orientation and gender expression, yet we hold as sacred the personhood and dignity of every beloved child of God. These bills would not only harm transgender persons and their allies in our communities, but would further disrespect, distort, and disregard God's image and likeness present in our siblings in Christ.

I urge you to join me in prayer. Pray for our transgendered siblings and their families who must suffer the indignity of having their self-worth and value questioned and debated. Pray for those who hold authority in this state and states across the nation. Pray for those who offer support and comfort to the transgender community.

Once we have prayed, I invite you to act. Reach out in support to those in your community with transgendered relatives and friends. Contact state legislators to oppose these bills and affirm the dignity and worth of our transgendered siblings.

We are all united in one Baptism that connects us no matter who we are, as members of the Body of Christ and therefore precious in God's sight. May we find the will and the courage to the best of our abilities to seek and serve Christ in all persons and respect the dignity of every human being.

May God bless and keep you and may we all be guided by the love and life of Christ Jesus our Savior.

Yours in Christ,

The Rt. Rev. Deon K. Johnson  
Bishop of Missouri

### A PRAYER FOR OUR TRANSGENDER SIBLINGS

*God of Love, you create us in Your divine imagine and fill us with the breath of your very self. Enfold in your loving embrace all those in the trans community who suffer the slights of injustice and the arrows of indignity. You see each one as a beloved, and precious called by name and claimed as your own. Challenge us, O Holy One, to speak out for those who are silenced, to stand with those who are bullied, and to go with those who face danger and oppression. Be with us, walk beside us, as we long for a day when every individual is safe and known and honored. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who knits us all together in one human family. Amen.*