



ARCHDIOCESE OF AGANA

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Sept. 16, 2021

Archbishop's Message:
Keep Jesus in our hearts amid
disagreements and difficulties of pandemic

Hafa adai my brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

How shall we cope with all the suffering in our island and in our world today? For one, we have each other. We are called to help one another.

Despite any differences you may have with one another, perhaps intense disagreements on the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccine mandates, abortion, same-sex unions, and so on, I implore all people of faith to keep peace intact in your hearts. Cherish the longstanding relationships and ties you've built with one another throughout the years ... as family, as friends, as co-workers, classmates or parishioners.

Disagree. Debate. Argue. But please, do so with the utmost dignity and respect for one another. All those many moments in your lives where you've shared common joys, common ground, the breaking of bread at family gatherings or fiestas, they are part of the treasures our Creator has bestowed to His children. Do not cause your friendships or family bonds to die. Satan is real and he delights when hatred overcomes love.

Amid the division and differences in viewpoints, it can be said that everyone is suffering one way or the other. Everyone has wounds. Everyone has fears. Each of us have concerns. None are less important than the other. I find it helpful to stop and remember that each person we meet here on earth is a direct result of the will and love of God our Father. During his days among us, Saint John Paul II put it this way: *"People need to be treated individually as persons, in the knowledge that Christ shed all his precious blood for each of them."*

So, we have each other to help carry us through these precarious times. More importantly however, we have God. Seek him in prayer. Go to him at Mass, in the Holy Eucharist and the Sacraments. Confess your sins to Jesus through the priests in Confession. Practice the supernatural virtues of faith, hope and love.

In his Message for World Youth Day in 1996, Saint John Paul II reminded young people from across the globe that *"The more you cling to Jesus, the more capable you will become of being close to one another."*

So, cling to Jesus! Trust in Him.

With God at the heart of all our words, thoughts and actions, we shall overcome this agonizing period in our history. Jesus loves us. Extend that love to one another.

The peace of Jesus Christ be with you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Michael J. Byrnes". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Most Rev. Michael J. Byrnes, S.T.D.
Archbishop of Agaña