



# Diocese of Davenport

*Office of the Bishop*

February 9, 2026

Dear Brothers,

As we enter this Lenten season, a time of conversion and renewal, I am writing to invite you to join me in a vital initiative for the healing of our communities and our nation.

Archbishop Paul S. Coakley, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, has recommended that our dioceses offer a Holy Hour for Peace and Justice. In light of the extraordinary political upheaval and tension currently fracturing our communities, our families, and even the body of the Church itself, I believe this is not just a recommendation, but a spiritual necessity.

We find ourselves in a moment where it is increasingly difficult to discern what is true. Our daily lives are inundated with ideological narratives and political theater that often obscure the Gospel. This atmosphere of division breeds mistrust and distance between us.

In his 1972 World Day of Peace message, St. Paul VI famously stated, "If you want peace, work for justice." Peace is not merely the absence of conflict; it is the fruit of a right relationship with God and one another. To work for justice, we must first have the grace to see clearly.

As the spiritual writer Henri Nouwen emphasized, prayer is the primary way we transform our hearts, our desires, and our way of seeing the world. It is my hope that our collective prayer during this Lenten season will grant us the grace to:

Discern the truth amidst the noise of modern rhetoric.  
Change our hearts to move beyond partisan divisions.  
Become prophets of justice who lead by example rather than by ideology.

I ask that each parish offer this Holy Hour for Peace and Justice on multiple occasions throughout Lent.

I have attached a sample Holy Hour outline to assist you in planning these services. I realize that in some of our communities, participation may be low, or the fatigue of the current climate may keep people away. However, even if you suspect your parishioners may not attend in large numbers, I ask that you personally hold this Holy Hour in your church. Your public presence before the Blessed Sacrament serves as a vital public witness to our priestly and diaconal vocation. We are called to be prophets in our world—standing in the breach and interceding for the people we serve. If my schedule permits, I would be happy to come to your parish to lead this holy hour personally.

I am deeply aware of the weight you carry as pastors in these difficult times. I pray for each of you daily, asking that the Lord sustain you in your faithful ministry. May our Lenten journey lead us to a deeper unity in Christ, who is our Peace.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Dennis G. Walsh  
Bishop of Davenport