

April 10, 2018

With thousands of other Canadians, we watched CBC's coverage of the Vigil for all those impacted by the horrible Friday night crash that killed fifteen of the Humboldt Broncos Junior A Hockey Team and left the rest of the team with very serious injuries. As families grieve, a community grieves with them. As a community grieves, a nation grieves with them.

In the face of such tragedy as this people come together. In tears they embrace one another. They listen to messages of condolence and feel the sympathy offered. They join in prayer. Some bow their heads. Some lift their heads. Some close their eyes. Some look out as if to a distant horizon looking for the tender mercies of God. When invited to hold hands they do. They know their need for each other and for God. They share their pain and seek comfort through one another and in the balm of God's kindness.

That vigil in the arena that is home to the Humboldt Broncos was preparation for what will be a very hard week...a hard week for that community and several others where funerals will be held, a very hard week for the world of hockey. Let us then remember in our prayers all those who will conduct these services and all those to whom they are ministering.

As we pray for those who have died and for their families in anguish and sorrow at this time let us also pray for those who survived the crash and for their families who keep vigil at their bedsides. Let us remember the medical teams who are tending to their sons and brothers and all who support them through their presence and professional care. Pray too for the young men whose beds are positioned in a way that enables them to hold hands so bravely in their fight for life.

And finally let us remember before God those called to Emergency Health Services and to Policing Services. Collectively known as The First Responders in the wake of tragedies, they face carnage and chaos with great courage. They do all they can to save lives and they indeed do save many. They go about their work with an efficiency of skill that is remarkable. But they also go about it with a huge heart for serving those in crisis. They know trauma and its immediate and lingering impact. They know it for individuals, families, and communities. They know it for them selves too. They work and they weep...they weep and they work time and again.

As we turn our hearts to the very wide community of the Humboldt Broncos, we turn them to God in prayer for mercy and comfort in the midst of their deep sorrow.

In all we see and hear and think and feel in a time like this we are reminded of the simplicity yet full measure of our faith in God and our care for one another. We have come to know that faith and care as The Summary of The Law. In response to a question concerning the greatest of all the commandments Jesus said, "The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord you God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this, "you shall love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:29-31)

In these and all our days we pray,
"Lord, have mercy upon us and write both these your laws in our hearts."



The Most Rev. Fred Hiltz
Primate, Anglican Church of Canada



The Rev. Susan C. Johnson
National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada