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Hope and Healing Among Peoples

I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal. – Jeremiah 30:17

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, the words of the prophet Jeremiah are certainly timely. Almost daily we read of the increasing violence in our streets, escalating enmity in our political life, mounting alienation among families and growing discouragement among religions. Examples abound: bullying on the internet, personal *ad hominem* attacks by politicians, shaming on social media, hundreds of killings each year, racial hatred and violence, technology breaking down the bonds that unite us, addictions that isolate and fragment families, mental illness born of poverty and addiction, nationalism, as well as egoism. This crisis of compassion requires that all men and women of faith strive to make real in our world and in our lives, the Lord's great command – *Love one another* (John 13:34). Our love for one another is a testimony to our faith and it is made real in our daily acts of kindness. Consequently, it is critical for each one of us to be schooled, time and time again, in the lessons of love. Simple acts of love are "that good seed" manifesting "the kingdom of God" (Matthew 13:24). But even Jesus acknowledged that our good seed is sown amid the weeds of evil that grow in this life (Matthew 13:30). We, who seek to know the Lord's love, must live lives that discover the good, promote the good and always strive to grow in the good.

Here in New Mexico, we have been blessed with a rich heritage of faith in our land, our people and our cultures. Over many generations, countless pilgrims have walked the roads of this enchanted land seeking the presence of God; seeking both forgiveness and God's favor. My dear friends, we are at a moment where we must turn to God in a more pronounced manner. Many young have lost sight of the sacred, many old have forgotten to behold the holy. Now, more than ever, we must seek the hand of God who heals all our wounds -- in our homes, in our society and in our Church. This is why I am declaring a special time of hope and healing throughout the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. I invite all people of good will to join with us as pilgrims in seeking healing among peoples. I have designated our two great places of pilgrimage, where many before us have sought to draw close to God's aid, as destinations for this "Pilgrimage for the Healing Among Peoples". In the southern part of the archdiocese, the place of pilgrimage will be *El Cerro de Tomé* (Tomé Hill), and in the north, *El Santuario de Chimayo*. I declare that from the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14, 2019) to Good Friday (April 10, 2020), will be a time of pilgrimage. Many parishes next week will celebrate a "Mass for Healing from Abuse", what a marvelous first step in this larger call to conversion. I invite all, as individuals or groups, to undertake this pilgrimage of conversion, to pray for healing among people, for our greater love for one another and for reconciliation of those who are alienated from one another. St. John tells us, "No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us" (1 John 4:12).

May almighty God bless us in this time of healing among peoples. May we find reconciliation, peace and good will. May the bond of charity unite us, and may the love of God grow ever stronger in our hearts, in our lives, and in our world.