“With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us...bind up the nation’s wounds...[and] do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.” -- The Second Inaugural Address of Abraham Lincoln

It is difficult to watch the news these days. Political polarization, name-calling amongst our leaders, hateful political commercials, racial strife, forest fires, hurricanes, murders, gang warfare -- the list could go on. These are stressful themes, and because sleep is very important to our health, my household has stopped watching the news before going to bed, opting instead for calming music. Keep that in mind if you are having troubled sleep. You can always check the weather and sports highlights by other means.

Political battles and racial strife, as seen in the news, are leaving us wounded. Six weeks before his assassination, Abraham Lincoln delivered his second inaugural address. The phrase, “With malice toward none; with charity for all...” opened the final paragraph of that speech. If spoken and acted upon today by our political leaders, these words could begin to bind our nation’s wounds. A ‘healed’ United States could bring peace and harmony among its citizens. That same charitable, ‘healed’ United States could be an agent for achieving a just and lasting peace with all nations. There is so much goodness amongst us that does not make the news. I have no doubt that goodness, charity, and love will win the day. Many are deciding that it is painful to be passive bystanders, and not right to simply watch the battles that are being fought. Instead, they are electing to be engaged in peaceful, kind, and nonviolent actions.

A couple of days ago, one of my sons and his wife became active bystanders, stopping to bear witness while a black man, black woman, and her four-year old daughter were stopped and being interrogated by a police officer. When the officer left, the threesome’s car had to be towed. So, my children offered them a ride to the grocery store, which was their destination. Afterwards, they also gave them a ride home. There was much more to the heartwarming, counter-cultural story, including a moment when the four-year old asked to touch my son’s “kinda funny” hair. They developed an instant bond.

In the latest edition of The Journey, a magazine produced by one of my favorite religious organizations, the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, the following prayer was included at the end of a statement they produced in the wake of “…the continued taking of innocent Black lives.” In the spirit of Jesus Christ, Abraham Lincoln, Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, Jr. and billions of others who seek malice toward none and charity for all, this prayer is fitting: “We pray, and invite you to pray with us, for God’s grace and guidance for the people and leaders of our cities and country so that as one people we will move towards understanding, healing, and a just society where all are treated with the dignity they deserve.” May I have an ‘Amen’ for their prayer of malice toward none and charity for all?

In God’s love,

Lanny F. Wilson, MD

“Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing’...” -- Luke 34:a