

## IHM Statement on the Sin of Racism in Our Time and Place

*The Congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*

As IHM Sisters, we desire to be in the midst of the pain of our world. Surely, that is where we find ourselves standing as we bear witness to the murder of George Floyd, the tragic and senseless killing of Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor, and the shameful list of all in our nation's story who have been treated differently, unfairly, violently because of their racial heritage.

How could our hearts not be profoundly disturbed by images of violence that suggest that some lives hold more value than others, that only some voices merit a hearing, that violence enacted against people of color is in any way normal and is anything but social sin?

We hold in tenderness and prayer cherished lives lost as well as families left to mourn their deaths, their absence, and their unfulfilled promise. We lament the sin of racism and the systemic injustices that disproportionately oppress our sisters and brothers of color.

But that is not enough. Our sympathy does not change the structures of injustice.

We refuse to accept that that is all we can do, all we can be.

We believe we are better than our brokenness and our shadow.

We call on the elected leadership of the United States to make of this moment a movement toward genuine transformation and the restoring of right relationship. We welcome all people to join us as we commit ourselves

- to embracing continuing conversion of heart;
- to owning and repenting our complicity in contributing to a worldview that treats some with suspicion and hostility based on race;
- to entering into deep inner soul work that challenges attitudes of racial bias;
- to profound listening to and learning from the voices and stories of people who have been unheard, dismissed, silenced, excluded;
- to building relationships with love, trust, and forgiveness in which we assume and draw forth the best of one another.

We call on our welcoming God, the Holy One, to heal our coming together, our breathing together, and to usher us closer to the dream of the beloved community in our beautiful yet wounded world.

## Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

“Any change must start with me.” We have all heard these words, expressed in a variety of ways before. But ask yourself...“Do I REALLY believe them?”

In their pastoral statement, *Open Wide Our Hearts*, the U.S. Catholic Bishops assert: “Racism is a failure to acknowledge another as brother and sister, created in the image of God.” If all of us deeply believed this, would we be experiencing the recent horror of the death of George Floyd at the hands of the police in Minneapolis? Do we believe it is an absolute necessity to look deep within ourselves to determine what part we play in the racist culture that prevails in this country?

As we consider the pro-life issues that we, as Catholics, highly value, we are invited to ask ourselves: Is not the murder of George Floyd and racist circumstances that gave rise to it, a pro-life issue? Racism is rooted in our culture, our country, our churches, and in us as a people.

As Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, we invite ourselves, our companions, and coworkers, along with our elected officials and church leaders, to address the atrocities of this issue on all levels. While we are long overdue in directly confronting the reality of racism, we recognize the need to look within our own hearts as we meditate on the words, “to change the world I must start with me.”

We support the work of many years on racism by PAX CHRISTI USA. We invite you to view and reflect on their challenging statement in response to the murder of George Floyd.

## The MARIANISTS CALL TO ACTION AGAINST RACISM

The Marianist charism calls us to build communities of gospel life and to recognize all people as made in the image and likeness of God. We call on all members of the Marianist Family to consider and do the following:

- be more intentional about welcoming people of color into our midst;
- recognize the leadership gifts of all people, as a reflection of our Marianist commitment to the discipleship of equals, by practicing shared leadership and power with people of color, instead of only including them as tokens;
- break the pattern of silence and the fear of acting against racism;
- preach and teach the understanding and acceptance of ethnic diversity;
- speak out against injustices and violence, particularly when they are directed toward ethnic and racial minorities;
- ensure pastoral dialogue and discussion on this matter;
- join in prayer that we might have the courage and conviction to stand for racial justice;
- develop greater cultural solidarity by working with people of color on projects or opportunities in our local areas

## School Sisters of Notre Dame

As School Sisters of Notre Dame and as the Atlantic-Midwest Province, we lament the death of Mr. George Floyd of Minneapolis, who died from inhumane and cruel treatment at the hands of local police. The cries of Mr. Floyd for mercy, and for breath, resound through our hearts, calling us yet again to repent our complicity in the scourge and sin of racism.

Our Sisters in the United States and Canada have a long and cherished history of ministry among African-Americans and other minority communities. It has been our privilege to have collaborated with, as well as learned from, these communities. Together we have embraced the Gospel-inspired mission of promoting dignity and equality for all. Together we have worked for nonviolent approaches to resolving the most intractable conflicts. In the memory of George Floyd, and all who have died from the violence of injustice, let us continue to work for racial, social, and ecological justice, mindful of the poignant and ever timely guidance offered to us by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

*“Violence as a way of achieving racial justice is both impractical and immoral.*

*I am not unmindful of the fact that violence often brings about momentary results.*

*Nations have frequently won their independence in battle.*

*But in spite of temporary victories, violence never brings permanent peace.”*

In the spirit of nonviolence, let us proceed in the struggle for justice. Let us awaken Dr. King’s dream in our lives and in our world. May peace and Justice prevail on Earth! Come Holy Spirit and renew the face of the Earth!

## Daughters of Charity Statement

We, the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul USA, unite our hearts, voices, prayers, presence, and action with those of people of goodwill around the globe in affirming that black lives matter.

We. Are. Outraged.

The charity of Christ impels us to speak out, as yet another black man has died at the hands of law enforcement. Actions by those in authority in our law enforcement system reveal again and again a broken system of chronic racism that hurts humanity.

We call for an immediate cessation of racist actions against people of color by all in positions of authority including all levels of law enforcement, legal systems, and governments. We call for national systemic change eradicating racism and eliminating white supremacy and white privilege.

We. Are. In solidarity.

When a sister or brother begs for help, begs for life, begs for air, begs to be released, and ultimately succumbs to death due to asphyxiation, we all symbolically suffocate. Our hearts ache with sorrow for Mr. Floyd's friends and family, some still too young to comprehend the magnitude of the appalling circumstances resulting in their father's unjust and agonizing death at the hands of out of control law enforcement.

We applaud Minnesota Attorney General, Keith Ellison, and the Minnesota legal system for taking firm action to indict all four officers involved covertly or overtly in the death of our brother, George Floyd.

We. Are. Committed to Action.

As women given to God, in community, to serve Christ in the those who are poor, we pledge to confront racism within ourselves and where we encounter it. We pledge to live Catholic Social Teaching. We join with others in the faith community in acknowledging our own complicity in institutional racism and we ask forgiveness of our sisters and brothers of color. We pledge to join others in building the Kingdom of God.

"We must love our neighbor as being made in the image of God and as an object of His love." St. Vincent de Paul

The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul of the United States of America comprises two Provinces of nearly 500 sisters serving in social services, prison ministry, health care, education, immigration, prevention of trafficking, and more.

## Xaverian Brothers Statement

The Xaverian Brothers, Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools, associate members, and partners in mission join with all those who are disturbed by the killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmuad Arbery in recent weeks. Our Fundamental Principles call us to give witness “to God’s care and compassionate love to all especially those who suffer from want, neglect and injustice.” We deplore racism in all its forms. This sin challenges us to raise our voices in support of the changes needed to bring about justice and compassion.

The international Xaverian community prays for the necessary conversion of minds and hearts required to accomplish this and supports the statement of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops:

“We should not let it be said that George Floyd died for no reason. We should honor the sacrifice of his life by removing racism and hate from our hearts and renewing our commitment to fulfill our nations’ sacred promise – to be a beloved community of life, liberty, and equality for all.”

As we observe Pentecost during this time of desolation and confusion, remember that “Jesus, your brother, has walked this path before you. In you, as Risen Lord, He wants to walk this path again, and His Spirit, the Spirit of God, now guides you.