



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

August 2020

Dear Pastoral Leaders:

In the 2018 pastoral statement, *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love*, The Catholic Bishops of the United States teach that: “The injustice and harm racism causes are an attack on human life. The Church in the United States has spoken out consistently and forcefully against abortion, assisted suicide, euthanasia, the death penalty, and other forms of violence that threaten human life. It is not a secret that these attacks on human life have severely affected people of color, who are disproportionately affected by poverty, targeted for abortion, have less access to healthcare, have the greatest numbers on death row, are most likely to feel pressure to end their lives when facing serious illness. As bishops, we unequivocally state that racism is a life issue. Accordingly, we will not cease to speak forcefully against and work toward ending racism. Racism directly places brother and sister against each other, violating the dignity inherent in each person.” (*Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love*, page 30)

Recently, our Bishops expressed grave concern that violent actions against African Americans in our country have become all too common. When we witness a violent act, such as the one that took the life of Mr. George Floyd, we know it is our responsibility to respond. Our faith calls us to speak out against racism and to work to transform structures that disregard the equal dignity of all human persons. In June Archbishop Gomez, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Bishop Shelton J. Fabre, chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism, released statements responding to the death of Mr. Floyd and the outrage expressed in communities around the country. Pope Francis reminds us that, “We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism or exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life.”

To respond to this call of faith in this critical moment, the Diocesan Public Policy Committee has assembled resources to help your parish/school/campus community pray, learn, and act together to transform our hearts, our policies, and our country.

Please see the attached resource packet cover page which lists the resources available and please do not hesitate to contact the Justice and Peace staff in your county’s Catholic Charities agency for assistance – we have included their contact information in the resource packet – they are eager to serve you!

Sincerely yours in Christ,



The Reverend Father Dan Condon
Chairperson
Diocesan Public Policy Committee