



African
American
Affairs
Ministry
Diocese of
Charlotte

African American Affairs Ministry Diocese of Charlotte

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Enough !!!

A Demand for Justice and an End to Institutional Racism



**African American
Affairs Ministry
Diocese of Charlotte**

The African American Affairs Ministry shares your sadness and outrage for the brutal killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and countless others. Their killings are all tragic reminders of the systemic racism and inequities toward the African American community that continue to plague our nation.

Racism, hate, and violence toward people of color are deeply rooted in America's history and culture. It must be rooted out and the systems and institutions that allow for institutional racism to run rampant must be dismantled or fundamentally changed.

Catholic Social Justice teaches us that all people are made in the image of God and we all possess an equal and inalienable worth. Each person has a right to all that is needed to allow him or her to live their full potential as intended by God. Human dignity is upheld when each person's needs are met and when he or she lives in harmony with others in a community that together pursues the common good.

The entire Catholic Community must raise their voices and take action to stand up against racism, wherever and whenever it occurs. We are all brothers and sisters and each and every time one of us is threatened, harmed or killed we share in the pain.

Real change happens only when we are willing to stand up and speak out. Racism will not be defeated solely through the actions of those affected; we must all work together toward this common goal.

As Martin Luther King famously said, "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."

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What is Institutional Racism?

“The systematic distribution of resources, power and opportunity in our society to the benefit of people who are white and the exclusion of people of color.”

Racism arises when—either consciously or unconsciously—a person holds that his or her own race or ethnicity is superior, and therefore judges persons of other races or ethnicities as inferior and unworthy of equal regard. When this conviction or attitude leads individuals or groups to exclude, ridicule, mistreat, or unjustly discriminate against persons on the basis of their race or ethnicity, it is sinful

Racism is what makes us see the "other" with suspicion or to attribute negative characteristics to an entire group of people. This evil manifests itself in our individual thoughts, and also in the workings of our society itself. Today's continuing inequalities in education, housing, employment, wealth, and representation in leadership positions are rooted in our country's shameful history of slavery and systemic racism. - open wide our hearts, the enduring call to love a pastoral letter against racism <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/upload/open-wide-our-hearts.pdf>

Institutional Racism in everyday life

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

- ◇ From the classroom to board room, African Americans are constantly under attack simply for the way they look.
- ◇ African American children are being scolded, sent out or outright excluded from activities for wearing cornrows, braids, dreadlocks or just wearing their natural hair.
- ◇ African American adults have been fired, passed over for promotions and have had job offers rescinded because of their hair.
- ◇ The clothes many African American males wear and how they wear them are often racialized in ways that make them criminally suspect.



EDUCATION

- ◇ Because public schools chiefly depend on local real estate taxes for funding, schools in areas with high housing values can offer more to students, often leaving many minority students out of the equation.
- ◇ Data from The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights show consistent problems for minority students that include limited access to early learning, lack of teacher equity, limited access to courses and programs that lead to college and career readiness, and low rates of teacher retention
- ◇ Without quality pre-school programs, many minority students start grade school at a disadvantage.
- ◇ Inexperienced teachers and teachers with limited professional development opportunities are twice as likely to teach in minority public schools

EMPLOYMENT

- ◇ Hiring discrimination against African Americans is still a reality—and has not declined in the past 25 years.
- ◇ The unemployment rate among African American workers and Hispanic workers is still higher than for whites, and in 14 states and the District of Columbia, black unemployment is at least twice as high as white unemployment
- ◇ Job applicants with “white-sounding” names get called back about 50% more of the time than applicants with “black-sounding” names, even when they have identical resumes.
- ◇ The median African American worker earns 75 % of what the median white worker earns in an hour

Institutional Racism cont...

HEALTHCARE

- ◇ African Americans unfortunately face discrimination in the world of healthcare.
- ◇ African Americans are far more likely than whites to lack access to emergency medical care and lower quality health services.
- ◇ The hospitals they go to tend to be less funded and staffed by practitioners with less experience.
- ◇ A study found that a majority of doctors have “unconscious racial biases” when it comes to their black patients. Myths that “black people have thicker skin or less sensitive nerve endings than white people” still persist today, the result being medical professionals are less likely to treat black people’s pain appropriately.
- ◇ African Americans have worse health outcomes than whites in nearly every illness category and as a result the average lifespan is 6 years less compared with whites

HOUSING

- ◇ The Ability to Purchase a Home – a Key Factor in the Affluence and Generational Well-Being of Generations of White Americans – Continues to Be Denied to People of Color.
- ◇ The median household income of black families in major metropolitan US housing markets is below the income required to pay principal, interest, taxes, and insurance on the average home in these markets.
- ◇ Even when minorities can afford to purchase home, they are often not able to afford to live in more “desirable” neighborhoods, where crime is lower, schools have more resources, and property values are more stable.

- ◇ While the formal practice of “redlining” was outlawed by the 1968 Fair Housing Act, the practice of excluding people of color from certain neighborhoods and communities continues ; albeit in new guises today. E.g. Racial Steering and Discriminatory Digital Marketing
- ◇ Banks are still more likely to extend housing loans to whites ,even in lower-income neighborhoods than they are to people of color.

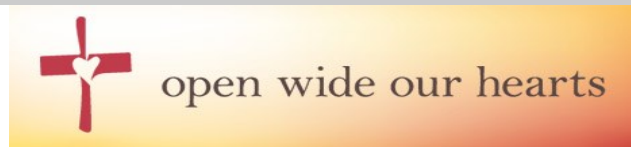
CRIMINAL JUSTICE

- ◇ In *Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and the Criminal Justice System*, the U.S. Catholic bishops wrote, “Racism and discrimination that continue to haunt our nation are reflected in similar ways in the criminal justice system.”
- ◇ Mandatory minimum sentences, harsher sentences for non-violent drug offenses, “three-strike” laws, and changes in policing have contributed to a 500% increase in incarceration over the past 4 decades. Currently, African Americans and Hispanics/Latinos make up 56% of prisoners but are only 28% of the U.S. population
- ◇ African Americans are more likely to experience traffic stops, searches, and juvenile arrests, and receive harsher sentences and greater length of sentencing.
- ◇ Police interactions are more likely to involve threats or outright use of force against African Americans and Hispanics than Whites.



Sources

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| ⇒ http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/upload/racism-and-education.pdf | ⇒ https://www.epi.org/publication/racial-inequalities-in-wages-income-and-wealth-show-that-mlks-work-remains-unfinished/ | ⇒ https://paxchristiusa.org/2018/04/12/housing-discrimination-persists-leaving-people-of-color-no-room-at-the-inn/ |
| ⇒ http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/upload/racism-and-employment.pdf | ⇒ https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/patient-support-advocacy/how-racism-segregation-drive-health-disparities | ⇒ http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/upload/racism-and-housing.pdf |
| | ⇒ https://www.aamc.org/news-insights/how-we-fail-black-patients-pain | |



"But racism still profoundly affects our culture, and it has no place in the Christian heart. This evil causes great harm to its victims, and it corrupts the souls of those who harbor racist or prejudicial thoughts.

The persistence of the evil of racism is why we are writing this letter now."

- Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love

Practical Steps the Catholic Community can take to eradicate racism

- ◇ Read (or re-read) Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love – A Pastoral Letter Against Racism using the accompanying Study Guide. Visit <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/index.cfm>
- ◇ Create various large and small group opportunities for family and community members to process their feelings in the midst of news and commentary about vulnerable populations and law enforcement. Encourage participants to reflect or share their own upbringing regarding comments in the home, from parents and individuals, media and entertainment, even practices of the Church about the merits or demerits of certain groups of people made to be “the other.” Ask, “How have I knowingly or unconsciously made this formation part of my world view? Where could I have spoken up but didn’t?”
- ◇ Arrange a safe space for young people to reflect and pray about racism and recent events. Listen to the current experiences of young people. Encourage and allow their creative expression. Invite them to generate methodologies that are meaningful to them.
- ◇ Attend an intergenerational interracial virtual town hall discussion on racism. Respect that for some African Americans, Hispanics and others, talking about personal racial experiences in a mixed race setting is painful as it is like reopening a wound that hadn’t fully healed.
- ◇ Use a pastoral and non-partisan lens to respond to concerns of family and community members about racism, policing and public safety. Do not politicize this. Lean on Gospel values, instead.
- ◇ Contact your pastor, parish council or diocesan office to discuss possible ways to dialogue with local law enforcement. Some community organizations funded by the bishops through the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) are leading these efforts in their communities. See what is happening near you.
- ◇ Learn about structural racism and its roots in your community and get involved in the work to address it. It might look like housing discrimination that continues to contribute to segregated communities or disparate access to quality education.
- ◇ Invite your parish to incorporate regular dialogue among parishioners about their experiences with racism, prejudice and racial discrimination.
- ◇ Invite your parish or faith-sharing group to host a conversation with a group of African American, Latino, Indigenous or African men and/or young people about their personal experiences with law enforcement.
- ◇ Encourage religious education classes and faith-sharing groups, as well as priests and deacons at your parish to speak out against racism and for personal responsibility to eradicate it. With children, use the storybook Everyone Belongs as a starting point for conversation. With teens and adults, explore how anti-racism action looks.



Responding to the Sin of Racism

Christians Bear Responsibility

- ◇ The fight against racism concerns everyone. In 2011 racism was the main theme at a meeting of Christian Churches Together in the USA, a new ecumenical forum that brings together representatives from almost all the various Christian traditions in our country. Together they reflected on the persistence of racism in our country, and the role it has played in keeping many people in poverty. In a joint statement, these Christian leaders said, “We call ourselves, our institutions, and our members to repentance. We make this confession before God and offer it to all who have endured racism and injustice both within the church and in society.” To our shame, Christians have been part of the problem. So, as Christians, we need to be part of the solution.

Loving the Neighbor

- ◇ When asked which was the first of all the commandments, Jesus replied the first is this: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ And the second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mk 12: 28-31). Racism goes against the commandment of love. Loving neighbors who are different from us through kind and generous actions can be as simple as forming friendships, supporting minority-owned businesses, or participating in community activities with those of other faiths or other races. Loving our God obligates us to love our neighbors as well.

You Cannot Love God and Hate Your Neighbor

- ◇ Scripture teaches: “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen” (1 Jn 4:20). This simple, straightforward teaching constitutes the heart of Christian ethics and is the reason Pope Benedict XVI can say, “One is so closely connected to the other that to say that we love God becomes a lie if we are closed to our neighbor or hate him altogether” (Deus Caritas Est 16).

Racism Is a Pro Life Issue

- ◇ Our faith calls us to respect and protect every human life—from its very beginning to its very end, and at every moment in between. Protecting human life also requires us to protect the dignity of each person, regardless of race, physical condition, age or stage of life. Tragically, people often are not treated with the respect that their human dignity requires.

What the Mass Teaches Us

- ◇ In reflecting on the liturgy, Pope Benedict XVI once said: “The Lord does not assemble the parish community in order to enclose it but in order to open it up. To be with the Lord means to be willing, with him, to seek all the children of God.” There is no place in the sacred liturgy, therefore, for any form of hatred or racism or self-righteousness. May our prayer together in the sacred liturgy not only reflect and strengthen the love we have for our brothers and sisters, but may it also be for us the source of grace that drives us to work for unity, justice, and peace among all the children of God.





Manifestations of Your Light

- Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

Good and gracious God,
Who loves and delights in all people, we stand in awe before You,
knowing that the spark of life within each person on earth is the spark of your divine life.
Differences among cultures and races are multicolored manifestations of Your Light.
May our hearts and minds be open to celebrate similarities
and differences among our sisters and brothers.
We place our hopes for racial harmony in our committed action
and in Your Presence in our Neighbor.
May all peoples live in Peace.



Prayer To End Racism

- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

O Lord our God, in your mercy and kindness, no thought of ours is left unnoticed,
no desire or concern ignored.
You have proven that blessings abound when we fall on our knees in prayer,
and so we turn to you in our hour of need.
Surrounded by violence and cries for justice, we hear your voice telling us what is required,
“Only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Mi 6:8).
Fill us with your mercy so that we, in turn, may be merciful to others.
Strip away pride, suspicion, and racism so that we may seek peace and justice in our communities.
Strengthen our hearts so that they beat only to the rhythm of your holy will.
Flood our path with your light as we walk humbly toward a future filled with encounter and unity.
Be with us, O Lord,
in our efforts, for only by the prompting of your grace can we progress toward virtue.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer to Saint Katharine Drexel

Compassionate God, who in your Son Jesus Christ healed the sick,
touched the hearts of the troubled and sent disciples to announce good news to the poor,
we offer this prayer for peace and for the intentions of all those who are praying with us.
Ever loving God, you called Saint Katharine Drexel to teach the message of the Gospel and
to bring the life of the Eucharist to the Black and Native American peoples.
By her prayers and example, enable us to work for justice among the poor and oppressed.
Draw us all into the Eucharistic community of your Church, that we may be one in you.
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen

Toward a Catholic Understanding of the Phrase “Black Lives Matter”

by Fr. Matthew Hawkins, Diocese of Pittsburgh

It is a curious thing that the cry “Black Lives Matter” is met with so much opposition and misunderstanding outside of African American communities. This cry means many different things to different people, but it is grounded in reality and in a specific and concrete history and in contemporary social experiences. These should not be misinterpreted or misunderstood.

The cry, “Black Lives Matter” is not a new cry that suddenly emerged in the past 10 years. It is a cry that is at least 400 years old, and has spanned many different stages of American history.

If a person understands the history and circumstances that have given rise to this cry, then they will not misinterpret it, they will not feel threatened by it, and they will not feel excluded from it. Properly understood, “Black Lives Matter” is an expression of fundamental Catholic values of family, community, universality, life, and faith.

Some may ask, “Why talk about black lives? Why not talk about all lives?” But to say “Black Lives Matter” is to say that “All Lives Matter,” including the lives of Black Americans that have been treated historically, and even today, as being expendable, disposable, and of little value.

It is the tradition of the Catholic faith that we experience the universal within the particular, and we participate in the global through the local. What does this mean?

It means that human beings who are part of a universal body, live within a particular society, culture, and period of history. This is as true for African Americans as it is for any other social and ethnic group.

As Americans, we have no problem recognizing the importance of passing on Irish-American culture in raising children and strengthening communities; nor do we find it difficult to value and pass on Italian-American culture and heritage, or German-American culture and heritage, or Polish-American culture and heritage. Why should it be any different when it comes to the life-sustaining role of the preservation and transmission of African American culture and heritage to future generations in order to have strong and healthy families and communities?

One example of this is the traditional role that African American spirituals have played in strengthening and nurturing us through times of adversity, including the brutality of slavery, the oppression of forced racial segregation, two great migrations that have torn African American families asunder, and the confinement of blacks to Northern urban ghettos.

The Spirituals, much like the blues, as musical art forms have enabled generations of African Americans to enter into the suffering of the human condition and therein, find solidarity with all of humanity. They have kept us sane in the midst of adversity. They have kept us whole. They have given us wisdom. And they have introduced us to the Gospel.

Moreover, the Spirituals have brought sacred scripture to life within the peculiarity of the African American experience. To turn our backs on our culture and our heritage would be to turn our backs on life itself. This is as true for us as it is for any other culture or ethnicity.

We are United

June 5th 2020 local artists and volunteers in Washington, D.C., painted “Black Lives Matter” in massive yellow letters on a street leading to the White House. Since then, cities across the country have followed with displays of solidarity



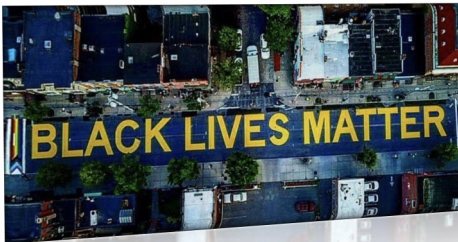
Washington, DC



Charlotte, NC



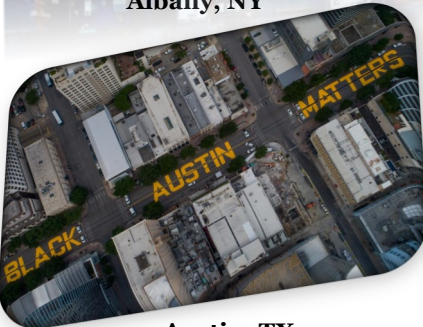
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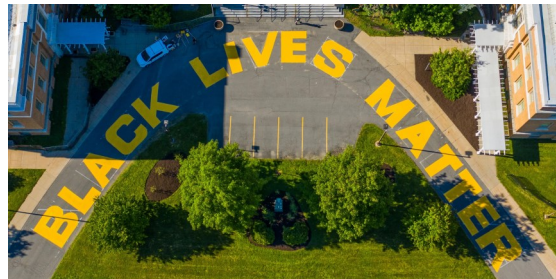
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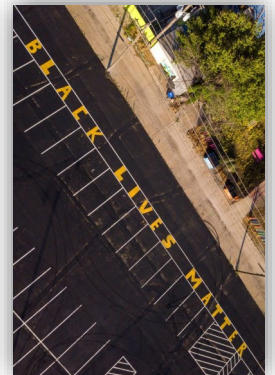
Baltimore, MD



Austin, TX



Oswego, NY



Topeka, KS



Palo Alto, CA



Raleigh, NC



Jackson, MI



Seattle, WA



Pittsburgh, PA



Atlanta, GA



Cincinnati, OH



Denver, CO



Flint, MI



Niagara Falls, NY



Montpelier, VT



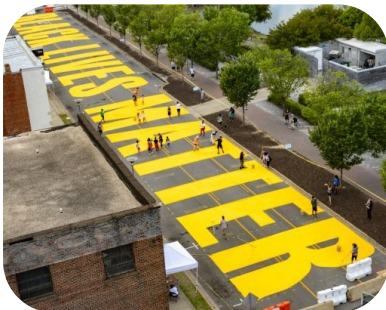
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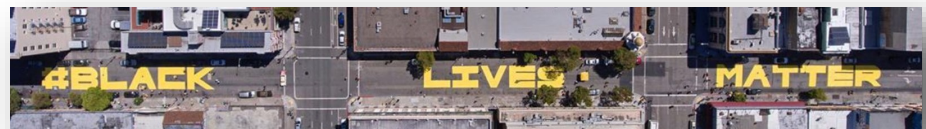
Charlotte, NC



Milwaukee, WI



Birmingham, AL



Oakland, CA



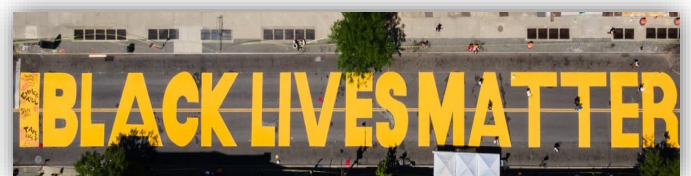
Fresno, CA



Winston Salem, NC



Los Angeles, CA



Brooklyn, NY

Combatting Racism Websites

- ◇ The National Black Catholic Congress - <https://www.nbccongress.org/>
- ◇ The US Conference of Catholic Bishops - <http://www.usccb.org/>
- * Combatting Racism - Educational Resources - <http://usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/educational-resources-on-racism.cfm>
- * Combatting Racism - Parish Resources - <http://usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/parish-resources-on-racism.cfm>
- ◇ National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus - <http://www.tnbccc.com/>
- ◇ Institute for Black Catholic Studies - <https://www.xula.edu/ibcs>
- ◇ We are Salt and Light - <https://www.wearesaltandlight.org/>
- ◇ Pax Christi USA: The National Catholic Peace Movement - <https://paxchristiusa.org/>

Online Events

- ◇ Online Masses - <http://www.usccb.org/about/communications/online-masses-during-coronavirus-crisis.cfm>
- ◇ Webinars - <https://www.nbccongress.org/nbcc-webinar-series.html>
- ◇ The 2020 Daniel Rudd Fund Grant Cycle is now open - <https://www.nbccongress.org/daniel-rudd-fund.html>

National/International Events

November 2020

- ◇ Black Catholic History Month
- ◇ November 14 - Subcommittee on African American Affairs meeting in Baltimore, MD

December 2020

- ◇ December 26-January 1, 2021 – Kwanzaa

October 2021

- ◇ October 10-11, National African American Youth and Young Adult Ministry Network Meeting
Memphis, TN

April 2022

- ◇ April 22-23 - Interregional African American Catholic Evangelization Conference (IAACEC)

August 2023

- ◇ August - World Youth Day , Lisbon Portugal

***Spiritual Enlightenment
Outreach***

***Awareness
Evangelization***



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