



9 September 2020
Memorial of Saint Peter Claver

Brother Priests,

This time of injustice, protests, distrust and polarization tears through our hearts like a plow ripping up the soil. It's painful. Yet, with the hearts of so many are so raw there is an opening for the Gospel of Life. Jesus gives us the Gospel of life to offer not only justice but love; instead of protests, the promotion of Good; unity where there is division. As our nation struggles with racism the voice and action of the Church cannot remain silent, we must *Live the Gospel of Life*.

Racism is a life issue. Brothers, our parishioners need to be empowered and called to *Live the Gospel of Life*, people of color need to know and be able to trust Catholics are with them because their lives matter. In our country, that trust is not there, so we have to earn that trust by the way we act. St. Peter Claver let it be known by his actions that he would be “the slave of the blacks forever”, what a way to earn trust!

This summer I met a priest from New York, and we were talking about life issues. He saw a lot of people who were involved with abortion in one way or another. Generally, they did not accept the Church's teaching or have any understanding of the Gospel of Life. People were not interested in arguments or preaching, sometimes not even discussion. In all the discouragement, there was one area of light: *surrounding women with Hope*. This priest found that when he surrounded people with hope opened the door to healing and a way forward.

This is good counsel for us today. Be intentional about *living the Gospel of Life* by surrounding people with Hope. Whether it be people who are considering abortion as an option, who have had an abortion, victims of racism, euthanasia, or any life issue, we must be prepared to *live the Gospel of Life* and surround people with Hope. This might be a good question to examine ourselves, our parishes, our pro-life and our peace and justice groups – does what we do surround people with Hope?

Brothers, our world needs healing, it's a great time to *live the Gospel of Life*! Encourage one another. Try not to take offense when people are angry, but focus on earning their trust by the way we live. Surround people with the Hope that Jesus Christ offers to all His children in distress.

With daily prayers through the intercession of our Lady,

Fr. Matt Libra
Associate Director of Respect Life Activities