



June 5, 2020

Dear Diocese of Monterey Catholic School Community,

As you receive this message, I pray that you and your family are safe and healthy. Congratulations on making it to the end of the school year. I extend my sincere gratitude to our administration, faculty, staff and families for coming together to take on our unique circumstances.

I am writing today to address two important but separate items: the nation's current unrest and our plans for the 2020-2021 school year considering the COVID-19 pandemic.

National Protests

These past two weeks have been a challenging time for our nation. While we welcomed the Holy Spirit on the Feast of Pentecost, we did so amidst national protests across the country in response to the death of Mr. George Floyd. As the protests continue, leaders in the Catholic Church have responded to pray for the repose of the soul of Mr. Floyd, to condemn racism, to support peaceful protests, and to call for an end of violent responses. I have included the statements from Pope Francis, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Bishop Daniel Garcia on the following pages for your reference.

We have an opportunity and responsibility as Catholic schools to intentionally foster the values of love, equality, justice and the life and dignity of the human person. We draw upon the gifts of the Holy Spirit – wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, fortitude, piety and fear of the Lord – as we prayerfully reflect on these current events, on how they affect our society and on how they influence our children. I pray that our Catholic school communities are forces for change and sources of good for our nation. May the Holy Spirit give us the strength to build the kingdom of God here on Earth for all God's children.

Plans for the 2020-2021 School Year

We continue planning for the 2020-2021 school year. Each school principal is leading a school site planning committee to draft the school's operations plan for next year, which will include details in the following areas:

- Health and Safety
- Instructional Programs
- Catholic Identity
- Personnel
- Family Engagement and Support

Once our county agencies review the guidance from the State of California Department of Public Health and Department of Education, specific county level guidelines will be provided as we further our preparations. While I am hopeful that we can return to in-person instruction in August, local and state guidance will determine our ability to resume our on-site program and will determine what restrictions are necessary.

In a scenario where we return in-person, there will protocols in place to ensure the health and safety of our faculty, staff and students. There will likely be health monitoring, frequent hand washing, use of face coverings or masks, regular cleaning and disinfecting, and physical distancing that may limit class sizes and events. It will be important that we remain flexible as plans will have to be adjusted throughout the year depending on how the virus moves through our community. Our schools will prepare plans for entering back into distance learning should public health require this scenario.

As we break for summer, we will be in contact with you to provide updates on our planning process and our readiness to begin the 2020-2021 school year.

Continued Prayers

During this time of unrest and uncertainty, we remember what we hear in Proverbs 3:5-6: *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him and He will make your path straight.* As we put our trust in the Lord, we ask the Holy Spirit to continue with us on our journey.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and you will renew the face of the earth. Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit you have taught the hearts of your faithful. In the same Spirit, help us to relish what is right and always rejoice in your consolation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessings,



Kimberly Cheng
Superintendent

Pope Francis: No tolerance for racism, but without violence

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-06/pope-francis-usa-george-floyd-protests-no-racism-violence.html>

Pope Francis spoke at the General Audience about the protests in the United States following the killing of George Floyd, saying we cannot claim to defend the sacredness of every human life while turning a blind eye to racism and exclusion.

By Vatican News

In his greetings to the English-speaking faithful at the weekly General Audience, Pope Francis addressed the people of the United States, as protests continue throughout the nation.

“I have witnessed with great concern the disturbing social unrest in your nation in these past days, following the tragic death of Mr. George Floyd,” he said. “We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life.”

Denouncing violence

The Pope then cited a recent statement from Archbishop José Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), to denounce outcroppings of violence at some protests.

“At the same time, we have to recognize that ‘the violence of recent nights is self-destructive and self-defeating. Nothing is gained by violence and so much is lost’.”

Pope Francis added that today he joins the Church in Saint Paul and Minneapolis, and throughout the entire US, “in praying for the repose of the soul of George Floyd and of all those others who have lost their lives as a result of the sin of racism.”

Prayer for reconciliation and peace

The Pope concluded his remarks with an invitation to prayer.

“Let us pray for the consolation of their grieving families and friends and let us implore the national reconciliation and peace for which we yearn,” he said. “May Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of America, intercede for all those who work for peace and justice in your land and throughout the world.”

Statement of U.S. Bishops' President on George Floyd and the Protests in American Cities

<http://usccb.org/news/2020/20-84.cfm>

May 31, 2020

WASHINGTON – Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles and president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has issued a statement on George Floyd and the protests in American cities that have taken place over the last several days. This follows the Friday statement <http://usccb.org/news/2020/20-83.cfm> from seven U.S. bishop chairmen of committees within the USCCB.

Archbishop Gomez's full statement follows:

The killing of George Floyd was senseless and brutal, a sin that cries out to heaven for justice. How is it possible that in America, a black man's life can be taken from him while calls for help are not answered, and his killing is recorded as it happens?

I am praying for George Floyd and his loved ones, and on behalf of my brother bishops, I share the outrage of the black community and those who stand with them in Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and across the country. The cruelty and violence he suffered does not reflect on the majority of good men and women in law enforcement, who carry out their duties with honor. We know that. And we trust that civil authorities will investigate his killing carefully and make sure those responsible are held accountable.

We should all understand that the protests we are seeing in our cities reflect the justified frustration and anger of millions of our brothers and sisters who even today experience humiliation, indignity, and unequal opportunity only because of their race or the color of their skin. It should not be this way in America. Racism has been tolerated for far too long in our way of life.

It is true what Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, that riots are the language of the unheard. We should be doing a lot of listening right now. This time, we should not fail to hear what people are saying through their pain. We need to finally root out the racial injustice that still infects too many areas of American society.

But the violence of recent nights is self-destructive and self-defeating. Nothing is gained by violence and so much is lost. Let us keep our eyes on the prize of true and lasting change.

Legitimate protests should not be exploited by persons who have different values and agendas. Burning and looting communities, ruining the livelihoods of our neighbors, does not advance the cause of racial equality and human dignity.

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 nation's sacred promise — to be a beloved community of life, liberty, and equality for all.



Statement regarding the death of Mr. George Floyd

June 3, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The horrendous death that you and I witnessed on television last week of Mr. George Floyd has evoked anger and pain in so many of us, regardless of our race. These experiences of mistreatment do occur all too often to people of color. They stir a disgust in so many of us asking, “Why?” Given their frequency we rightfully ask, “When will this kind of thing end?”

We can be better than this as a nation! This horrific event casts a spotlight on the reality of racial, criminal and economic injustice that is alive in our country. It reaffirms for me that we need to be willing to engage in a serious conversation about race relations. Before we heal the wound of racism in our country and before we start telling people what we believe, we need to hear the pain that is real and palpable for so many people today.

It is my hope that our civil leaders will help us to engage in a conversation that is real and allows us to engage in honest dialogue, with the hope that substantive changes in our society can occur from our local neighborhoods to the economic and judicial system of this country.

Although profound anger has been expressed in the streets this week, we must be reminded that we have many wonderful police officers who are here for you and me to protect us and are willing to assist us when we are vulnerable or in danger of any kind of hurt or pain. I am grateful for their service as ‘first responders.’ They put their lives on the line and we should have profound respect for them.

Lastly I wish to address the protest, violence and destruction that we have seen in our American cities. Peaceful protest is an expression of our anger and desire to change, but the destruction of people’s property and violence against anyone is NOT a means to justice. One of my great heroes has always been the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He inspired me as a child of color in the community I was raised and greatly influenced me in my priestly ministry. He believed strongly in calling out all injustice and to speak the truth, because at the end of the day, the truth will set us free! Let us pray for each other and for our country. May we all be instruments of healing!

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Daniel E. Garcia
Bishop of Monterey