

Sacred Heart of Jesus

I have good news for you. The good news is that the love of Jesus Christ pours out on us. The love of Christ pours out from his heart, the love of salvation for our world pours out from his Sacred Heart. When the soldier pierced the Sacred Heart of Jesus with the lance of violence and hatred, out flowed his love. The love of Christ symbolized in his water and his blood, the water of the grace of our baptism, the first sacrament of healing and forgiveness, the blood of the Holy Eucharist, through which we become “blood relatives” if you will with Christ our Savior. Our Lord and God is also our brother and it is only through him that we can dare to call God Our Father. That is good news that is true and real for us today, right now in this place. In this time of a pandemic, in this time when the tensions over racial division has raised up in our country to a new sense of awareness, the whole world is calling for change and Jesus on this day, June 19, 2020 pours our love, mercy, grace, and peace through his Sacred Heart. That is the truth of our Catholic Faith.

The world is full of lies and lies always lead to division. Genetically, there is only one race, the human race. God created every one of us in his own image and likeness. That is the truth. We have created a false construct that there are different races, rather than a variety of physical expressions of the one human race. That lie opens up the devil, the prince of lies to work in the human heart to create fear. The fear of the physical differences in peoples leads to the sin of oppression. The oppression of the dominate group over the other, and we acknowledge tonight, maybe in a way that we never have before, that White domination is kills people. It kills people of color physically and it kills everyone spiritually. We hear in Deuteronomy today about the sin of oppression and slavery of Egypt over the people of Israel, and that the Lord loved the Israelites and “brought [them] out with his strong hand from the place of slavery and ransomed them from Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Those words are for our time right now.

God is working in powerful ways to ransom every one of us, to ransom our cities and our nation, to ransom our world and even the Church from the sin of oppression that leads us to fall into the lie and into sin of racism. God, who knows all things, led the Catholic Church to place the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the Friday after the Sunday that we celebrate the Body and Blood of the Lord. God who knows all things, choose June 19, 1865 as the day when slaves in Texas heard the Emancipation Proclamation read to them and they were set free, the day when slavery as an institution ended, a day that our country remembers as Juneteenth. However, oppression did not end. The wound of racism was not healed and the anger that has been under the surface for centuries erupted from the ground where George Floyd died, where he cried out, "I can't breathe." God comes to us with the breath of the Holy Spirit this year of huge social unrest, The Sacred Heart of Jesus and Juneteenth fall on the same day. Is that not Jesus speaking from his wounded heart to our wounded hearts?

The Pastoral Letter on racism that the Bishops of the United States wrote in 2018 called *Open Wide our Hearts*. Jesus opened wide his Sacred Heart to us on the cross. He asks that we open wide our hearts to him to receive his love, his mercy and forgiveness. When we do this, we receive a love that the world cannot give. It is a love that first calls us to look deep into our hearts so that we can better love our neighbor. If we say that we are not effected by racism, we need to look deeper. Racism is a wound so deep, that all of us have been hurt by it in one way or another. It is so pervasive in our society that it has become the polluted air we breathe. We turn to God to ask him to clean the air with the water and the blood of that flowed from the heart of Christ.

The only solution is love, the love of God that Jesus pours upon us. "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God." We begin with prayer and then we must act.