

Pastor's Corner

Need for Conversion on Racism; Need for Order

I have never been stopped by a police officer for taking a walk. I have African American friends who have had that experience and who live in fear of being arrested for walking.

For several years, we in the Archdiocese of New Orleans have prayed a Family Prayer during Mass for an end to violence, murder and racism. We pray the prayer because those realities – violence, murder and racism – remain an unfortunate part of our lives.

This past week, we witnessed an instance of racism that set off a firestorm of protest and violence in our country. A black man, George Floyd, was senselessly and brutally killed by a white police officer in Minneapolis – on camera. The incident tapped deeply into the sense of disenfranchisement and distrust felt by people of color.

Outraged by what occurred, people of various ethnic groups took to the streets to protest what happened and to call for justice – rights our Constitution enshrines. Unfortunately, extremists used the occasion to engage in acts of violence, looting and destruction which are abhorrent, cannot be condoned and must be stopped.

We need to continue to pray the Family Prayer to end violence and racism. The call to love like Jesus requires us to confront racism and complacency about racism and to beg God for ways to address the issue and the systemic causes that underlie it.

A photographer named Marco Mancinelli was taking pictures for a story on a Montessori School. After he prayed to God to see something great to photograph, he noticed a little girl lay her head on the lap of a little boy. The girl and boy were colorblind to their racial differences. Mancinelli calls the photo (below) “Age of Innocence.” May God grant us the grace to advance the cause of racial justice, harmony and order in our time.

God bless,
Fr. Joe

