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## Bishop George Leo Thomas' Statement on the Killing of George Floyd

I join the growing chorus of U.S. Catholic Bishops speaking in one voice as we express our deep sadness over the heartbreaking death of Mr. George Floyd. We urgently pray for the cessation of the violence and destruction which has so sullied the memory of a man who lost his life under tragic and unnecessary circumstances.

We are broken-hearted, sickened, and outraged to watch another video of an African American man being killed before our eyes. The senseless taking of life defies the fundamental principles of justice and respect for human life. We must recognize the fact that all lives are sacred. As Catholics, it is not enough to relegate our concern to only thoughts and prayers. Our Church, at every level, must speak out unequivocally and work against the sin of racism.

As the U.S. Bishops stated in their recent pastoral letter against racism, "Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love," people of good will must never turn a blind eye when citizens are being deprived of their human dignity and even their lives. Indifference is not an option. The Bishops of the United States consistently hold that, "It is not a secret that... attacks on human life have severely affected people of color, who are disproportionately affected by poverty, targeted for abortion, have less access to healthcare, have the greatest numbers on death row, and are most likely to feel pressure to end their lives when facing serious illness. As Bishops, we unequivocally state that racism is a life issue" (p. 30).

We plead for an end to the violence in the wake of this tragedy. We support peaceful, non-violent protests and stand in support of those understandably outraged. We pray for comfort for all grieving families and friends. We applaud the majority of law enforcement officers who follow lawful protocols and demonstrate appropriate restraint, often in the face of threats, and we express our profound sorrow to the families of law enforcement officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

As we approach the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity, we plead for the strength and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. "With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, this wellspring of strength and courage must move us to act. Consequently, we all need to take responsibility for correcting the injustices of racism and healing the harms it has caused" ("Open Wide our Hearts," p. 23). We challenge everyone, especially those from different cultural backgrounds, to come together peacefully to work toward a society where justice, peace, and charity may be shared by children of the same Creator.

Asking God's abundant blessings upon our Diocese, City, State, and Nation, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Bishop George Leo Thomas  
Bishop of Las Vegas

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