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STATEMENT ON RACIAL JUSTICE

The Most Reverend Michael C. Barber, S.J., Bishop of Oakland, and the Diocese of Oakland Task Force for Racial Justice

As stated by the Executive Committee of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2017:

Racism has rightly been called America's original sin. It remains a blot on our national life and continues to cause acts and attitudes of hatred, as recent events have made evident. The need to condemn, and combat, the demonic ideologies of white supremacy, neo-Nazism and racism has become especially urgent at this time. Our efforts must be constantly led and accompanied by prayer - but they must also include concrete action.

The killings of African American women and men over the past year have reinforced the need for all Americans to combat systematic oppression and racism. Voices raised as part of the Black Lives Matter discussions remind us that African Americans and other People of Color continue to be blighted by structural racism, lack of opportunity, health and wealth disparities, and direct violence committed by those who are responsible for our communities' wellbeing. We include sacred, secular, public and private structures.

The Diocese of Oakland acknowledges and recognizes that more must be done within this Diocese to address and end these inequities. Grounded by our belief in God and our knowledge that each of us was created by God and is loved by God, the Diocese of Oakland is committed to being a significant change agent in the fight for racial and social justice. While we strive to ensure that all people of color are granted the equal rights and privileges as our white sisters and brothers, given the long and specific history of oppression of African Americans in this country and within this Diocese, we begin this renewed commitment with an initial focus on the collective negative experiences of our African American sisters and brothers.

We further recognize and understand that racial and social justice is complex and requires work. In the coming months, the Task Force will advise and assist Bishop Barber in the following areas:

- Education
- Pastoral Care
- Social Justice

“When we begin to separate people in our thoughts for unjust reasons, when we start to see some people as “them” and others as “us”, we fail to love. Yet love is at the heart of Christian life.

“Racism is a moral problem that requires a moral remedy -- A Transformation of the Human Heart—that impels us to act” (source: Open Wide Our Hearts. 20)