



DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH
THE BISHOP'S OFFICE



September 4, 2020

To All Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, Religious Men and Women, and Faithful Laity of the Diocese of Fort Worth

The current events in our nation are cause for concern as we provide pastoral leadership and charitable care for the People of God and all men and women of good will. Much of the tenor and substance of the political discourse in our nation lacks the respect and civility that our republic has consistently relied upon throughout our history. The COVID-19 Pandemic and our response to its effects have produced fear and anger in the face of unemployment and financial hardships. We see this most acutely in civil unrest that has exacerbated racial tensions among people in our cities along with greater pressure among the men and women who put themselves in harm's way as police officers in service to our community. We have witnessed the ugliness of sins of racism and sins of violence and anarchy calling for the destruction of our society.

I join my voice with my brother bishops, especially Archbishop Jerome Listcki of Milwaukee, who said, "Violence can never be the means to attain peace and justice. The Church stands as a beacon of hope. The sins of violence, injustice, racism, and hatred must be purged from our communities with acts of mercy, with the protection and care for the dignity of every human person, with respect for the common good, and with an unwavering pursuit of equality and peace. We reiterate the value of those whose human life and dignity in this country are marginalized through racism and our need to fight for them including the unborn."

On Wednesday, September 9, 2020, we celebrate the Memorial of Saint Peter Claver, who heroically witnessed to human dignity by offering solace through acts of mercy and bringing the Gospel and Sacraments to people who had been enslaved. I am asking that on this day all of our priests offer the Mass for Peace and an End to Civil Discord and that they preach on how mindless and evil hatred is at the heart of the violent acts of racial discord and anarchy that we are suffering today. If our people are unable to participate in Mass on that day, I would ask that they offer the Prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel for these intentions and that they engage in one spiritual or corporal work of mercy.

Saint Paul writes that where sin abounds, grace abounds the more. As members of Christ's Church, we are the ministers and instruments of that grace. It is our responsibility to enter into the unrest in our society caused by sin with the clarity and charity of the Gospel preached by Christ. Please be assured of my prayers for each of you as I seek the same from you on my behalf, I remain,

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael F. Olson".

Most Reverend Michael F. Olson, STD, MA
Bishop of Fort Worth

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