



The Roman Catholic Community of Saint Paschal Baylon
ENRICHING MINDS – NOURISHING SOULS

Since 1953

Founded & Administered by the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament since 1953

Pastoral Letter on Racism & Prayer

Wednesday, June 10, 2020

Dear SPB & Friends:

During this time, we have been praying and thinking a lot over recent events. It reminded me of two pieces of literature that emphasize our interconnectedness with God and one another. First, from Megan McKenna's *Blessings & Woes*:

One day a couple of years ago when I was on vacation in southern Mexico near the Chiapas border. I had spent the morning with some youngster talking about the rebels and [the] church, about Bishop Ruiz and the gospel of the following Sunday. I bought lunch for a half dozen of the [friends that I met there and asked one to say grace. Without hesitating, one immediately said], "God is great, God is good, God lives in this neighborhood."

Secondly, as we come upon the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ this weekend, I am reminded of a passage from Saint Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 12: "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. ... As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!' ..."

Like so many of you, the pain and heartbreak of the events surrounding the recent death of George Floyd and the resulting protests and violence have permeated our thoughts and discussions in the midst of so many busy events within our lives. We may feel powerless and do not see a clear way forward. As Catholics, we are called to end racism, work for justice and reconciliation for all people, to heal the Body of Christ, and have Christ help us reconcile to God. We are ambassadors for Christ. Also, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 1935 is clear:

Every form of social or cultural discrimination in fundamental personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, color, social conditions, language, or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design.

In a live streamed general audience on June 3 from Vatican City, Pope Francis specifically addressed our country when he said, "We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life." He also

prayed for the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Our Lady of the Americas) to help “all those who work for peace and justice in your land and throughout the world.”

This is a critical time for all in our country and our world, and especially those who are Catholic, to examine our collective conscience, to recognize inequity and discrimination, to begin conversations, and to listen and learn from each other so that together we can promote understanding among people and create a world that is truly more just. Our school’s accreditation plan and Catholic Identity goal is focused on the Catholic social justice teaching of solidarity. We would like to share with you four opportunities to put our faith into action and live the Gospel values:

1. Join in a webinar hosted by the Diocesan Social Action Commission. Others in the diocese, including some from our parish’s Social Action Commission, will participate next Tuesday, June 16 from 12:00-1:30 p.m. for a “lunch and learn.” *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love* is a pastoral letter developed by the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Those attending the Zoom meeting can learn about the Church’s teaching addressing racism in our congregations and community, hear compelling speakers and personal testimony, and be better equipped with a variety of tools and resources to live our teachings for our parish and neighborhoods. Please click [here](#) to register for the event.
2. Join with our parish’s Social Action Commission and engage in dialogue and activities that support our Catholic teachings and parish. Collectively, we can learn from one another so that together we can promote understanding among different people. To get involved, please email spbsocialaction@gmail.com. Our commission recently met and is looking into some solidarity time on Wilson Mills Road, with our first responders in Highland Heights, to stand together as God’s family, united in the common good message.
3. Pray together on Tuesday, June 16, 7:00 – 8:00 PM in church. Join in our special holy hour, prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, a liturgical ritual of exposition with Taizé mantra style music, readings and silence. This month’s theme is praying for peace and justice in our country and an end to racism and violence.
4. Let’s also talk about this in our parish with a Zoom meeting on Wednesday, July 1, 6:30 PM. Let us know if you wish to participate and we’ll send you an invitation, link and a kit that will be a helpful tool for our discussion, provided by “Nuns on the Bus,” the Network organization. Email psr@saintpaschal.com.

We pray together, with one adapted from the USCCB, and a final thought from Megan McKenna: We want God, the Body of Christ together, to be clearly in our neighborhood.

*God of Heaven and Earth,
you created the one human family
and endowed each person with great dignity.
Aid us in overcoming the sin of racism.
We ask forgiveness for our sins of omission
that in the past have headed or blinded us from working on this sin.*

*Grant us your grace in eliminating this blight
from our hearts, our communities,
our social and civic institutions.
Fill our hearts with love for you and our neighbor
so that we may work with you
in healing our land from racial injustice.
Protect and guide those called to serve with us:
those in law enforcement, business workers,
those caring for the vulnerable,
and all who need your assistance
as we struggle to work for the common good together
during these trying times.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

In Christ our Eucharist:

Rev. John Thomas Lane, SSS, Pastor

Rev. Michael J. Arkins, SSS, Senior Parochial Vicar

Rev. John Christman, SSS, Editor *Emmanuel Magazine*

Ms. Diane Raguz, Principal

M/M George and Anna Peko, Catechetical Leaders & Evangelization Directors

Mrs. Rachel Cahill, Social Action Commission Chair

Mrs. Sheila Klepcyk, Assistant Principal

Ms. Evamarie Rossi Mickol, Youth Minister

Mrs. Roberta Modica, Music/Liturgy Coordinator