



CATHOLIC CHURCH

ST. COLUMBA

June 19, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

St. Columba Catholic Church Parish Council writes in outrage at systemic racism and stand in solidarity with all our Black Brothers and Sisters. We also stand in solidarity, and in support of our Pastor, Father Aidan McAleenan. Father Aidan's courage to advocate and act is communicating transparently and speaking truth to power as a white Roman Catholic Priest. He is in solidarity with our parishioners, and with the wider Black community, who is suffering, living in fear, and dying from police brutality, systemic racism, and inequities.

The institutionalized racism causing disproportionately more hardship, illness, and death for people of color in the COVID-19 pandemic had already deeply disturbed us. And then we were enraged by the recent deaths at the hands of police -- George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota; Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky; Ahmaud Arbery in Brunswick, Georgia; Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida--whose killer's acquittal in 2013 sparked the Black Lives Matter Movement. Before, then, and now, countless Black people have fallen victim to police brutality and other violence spurred by racism. The recent horrific public hangings of Black men in Southern California and across the country bring even more sense of urgency to the Black Lives Matter Movement. We know violence, oppression, and discrimination are inherently sinful. The sins of systemic racism, police brutality, and societal inequity deeply wound and afflict Our Parish, Diocese, City and Nation.

With deep compassion, we acknowledge how exhausted the Black Community is from living this reality of systemic racism and inequity. Systemic racism is only dismantled when those with privilege do the work, enter into dialogue and action, recognizing their role in how they benefit from institutionalize racism. Until all of us, children of God and Brothers and Sisters in Christ are valued and loved for Who We Are and Whose We Are, created wonderfully and made in the image and likeness of God, **Sin Exists.**

May the Lord watch between me and thee while we are absent one from another. Amen.

Genesis 31:49

The Eucharist empowers and requires our action for Social Justice. We, the Parish Council, are committed to the entire Parish, our Pastor Father Aidan and the Diocese of Oakland in this National and Global Movement, proclaiming the **Good News** that **BLACK LIVES MATTER**. Join us as we stand vigil and take action.

The Parish Council recommends the following Short-Term Actions:

1. Join the Sunday, June 21st Call to Action, 12 p.m.- 12:30 p.m., led by the Action Planning Group
2. Draft and share a letter of our stance in support of our Pastor and Black Lives Matter
3. Identify person(s) to assist the Parish Council in supporting our Parish in addressing issues of institutionalized racism and social inequities
4. Put into place a Media Response and Public Relations Plan
5. Form a new prayer group to surround Father Aidan, intentionally praying for his gift of speaking truth to power and his safety.
6. Conduct a Town Hall Meeting, Monday, June 22nd at 7:00pm to encourage Parish leadership and involvement regarding:
 - a. Support of Father Aidan
 - b. Actions and vigils against systemic racism and inequity
7. Add a large cross to the Memorial Garden with the words 'Racism is a Sin'

To all parishioners, we hold you in our prayers as we pray for our entire parish, Father Aidan, and all our Brothers and Sisters of color, especially Black Catholics in the Oakland Diocese. Participate in the actions of our parish and greater communities, whether in person or in solidarity.

May we continue to turn to our God for Hope in this time of deep national and institutional crisis, knowing and trusting our God is with US.

Sincerely,

Your Faithful Parish Council

Co-Chairs Vernon Whitmore and Kas Neteler

Members

Ruthie Bolden Laureteen Brazil Michelle David Harriett Dunn Rich Laufenberg Art OdomKim
Ramirez Pollock Cristin Winn Reyes Christophe Rudolph Joyce Scotlan Godfrey Wilson

May the Lord watch between me and thee while we are absent one from another. Amen.

Genesis 31:49
