



IMMACULATE HEART^{OF} MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR JUNE 7, 2020

Dear friends in the Lord,

I've agonized all week about what to write in this place in response to the events of the last week. It's not hard to find something to say; the challenge is to do such grave matters justice in 350 words or less. In the end, the statement of Archbishop José Gomez of Los Angeles, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, says much of what I want to say myself:

The killing of George Floyd was senseless and brutal, a sin that cries out to heaven for justice. How is it possible that in America, a black man's life can be taken from him while calls for help are not answered, and his killing is recorded as it happens?

I am praying for George Floyd and his loved ones, and ... I share the outrage of the black community and those who stand with them in Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and across the country. The cruelty and violence he suffered does not reflect on the majority of good men and women in law enforcement, who carry out their duties with honor. We know that. And we trust that civil authorities will investigate his killing carefully and make sure those responsible are held accountable.

We should all understand that the protests we are seeing in our cities reflect the justified frustration and anger of millions of our brothers and sisters who even today experience humiliation, indignity and unequal opportunity only because of their race or the color of their skin. It should not be this way in America. Racism has been tolerated for far too long in our way of life.

It is true what Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, that riots are the language of the unheard. We should be doing a lot of listening right now. This time, we should not fail to hear what people are saying through their pain. We need to finally root out the racial injustice that still infects too many areas of American society.

But the violence of recent nights is self-destructive and self-defeating. Nothing is gained by violence and so much is lost. Let us keep our eyes on the prize of true and lasting change. Legitimate protests should not be exploited by persons who have different values and agendas. Burning and looting communities, ruining the livelihoods of our neighbors, does not advance the cause of racial equality and human dignity.

We should not let it be said that George Floyd died for no reason. We should honor the sacrifice of his life by removing racism and hate from our hearts and renewing our commitment to fulfill our nation's sacred promise — to be a beloved community of life, liberty, and equality for all.