



“If you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother, then come and offer your gift.”
(Mt 5, 23-24)

July 5, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Faith,

Less than three weeks ago, on the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, I issued a pastoral letter on the Eucharist. In that letter I stated, “Brothers and sisters, there is no room for division among us; it is our prayer, it is God’s will that we be ‘one body, one spirit in Christ.’” Now this short while later, we find our Catholic community roiled over a video made by Dr. Rob McCann, the CEO of Catholic Charities of Eastern Washington. While the subject of the video – racism – is certainly appropriate in the aftermath of the horrific and unjustified death of George Floyd, Dr. McCann’s blunt presentation was interpreted by many as levying false accusations against “whites” and the Catholic Church. This was only one of several issues that his video raised. Many faithful Catholics, whose lives evidence a daily commitment to compassion and justice, expressed their disappointment and frustration with Dr. McCann’s message.

I met with Dr. McCann earlier in the week to address my concerns over a number of statements he made in his presentation. Our conversation was candid and frank – and hopefully productive. Dr. McCann has now posted a letter that I encourage everyone to read. It provides some retractions and clarifications. While his letter answers some of my concerns, others remain. His support of the Black Lives Matter organization (BLM), albeit now modified, puzzles me. BLM is in conflict with Church teaching regarding marriage, family and the sanctity of life. Moreover, it is disturbing that BLM has not vocally condemned the recent violence that has torn apart so many cities. Its silence has not gone unheard. One need not stand with BLM to stand for Black lives. I will address this and other issues with Dr. McCann in future meetings. Besides Dr. McCann’s posted letter, some additional steps will be taken as we go forward. These are:

- At least for this year, the Annual Catholic Charities Christmas Collection will either be replaced by or taken in conjunction with the Black and Indian Missions Collection;
- I will ask Catholic Charities to sponsor a series of speakers, approved by me, to address the subject of Church and Race;
- Catholic Charities will address the issue of abortion and its detrimental effects on the Black community. In places such as New York City, more Black babies are aborted each day than are born. As Catholics, we believe in the sanctity of life from conception to natural death.

Let us go forward from this moment and remember that through our baptism we are, “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people” (1 Pt. 2, 9). If we keep this truth before our eyes daily, and if we breathe that truth into all that we say and do, we may be assured that Jesus Christ, the Divine Physician, will heal any divisions that yet might persist among us.

Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us. Live Jesus in our hearts, forever.

In Christ,

Bishop Thomas A. Daly