



# Archdiocese of Cincinnati

Office of the Archbishop

June 1, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Yesterday, on Pentecost Sunday, we learned from St. Paul that “As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor 12:12-14).

These words are particularly poignant coming as they do just days after the senseless and brutal killing of George Floyd at the hands of a law enforcement officer in Minneapolis. I join Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda of St. Paul and Minneapolis and my brother bishops across the United States in praying for the repose of the soul of Mr. Floyd and all others who have lost their lives in a similar manner. This deeply disturbing incident reminds us once again of the divisions that continue to plague our human family which is called to be one body in Christ.

Through creation, as a divine gift, God has endowed each person with intrinsic worth and value. Human life is sacred. Every human being is created in the image and likeness of God. The dignity and sanctity of each person, without exception, is inherent and permanent, and is to be respected from conception to natural death. Because of this, the Catholic Church opposes as profoundly sinful racism and anything that is antithetical to God’s will and the Gospel of Life. We cannot turn a blind eye to the humiliation, indignity, and unequal opportunity experienced by millions of our brothers and sisters simply because of their race or the color of their skin and yet still profess to respect every human life. Opposing racism must therefore be an integral part of our pro-life witness as Catholics.

What is needed, and what I am urging for each of us, is a genuine conversion of heart, a conversion that will compel change and ultimately reform our institutions and society. As Catholics, we are called to radiate the love of Christ to all people and to be witnesses to His kingdom on earth. We need to look deep within ourselves, in prayerful humility, and ask our Lord to remove any vestige of prejudice or hatred from our hearts, any sinful inclination that keeps us from loving as He does.

Please join me either in person or online this Wednesday, June 3, the Feast of St. Charles Lwanga, at 5:15 p.m. at the Cathedral of St. Peter in Chains for a “Holy Hour for Conversion and Peace”. Many parishes across our archdiocese are also engaging in prayer for conversion and peace.

As one body in Christ, let us pray:

We thank you, O Lord,  
For in your loving wisdom  
You created one human family  
With a diversity  
That enriches our communities.

We pray to you, O Lord,  
That we always recognize each member of this human family  
As being made in your image and beloved by you,  
With worth and dignity.

We pray to you, O Lord,  
That we may envision a way forward  
To heal the racial divisions  
That deny human dignity and  
the bonds between all human beings.

We pray to you, O Lord  
That we may affirm each person's dignity  
Through fair access for all  
To economic opportunity, housing,  
Education, and employment.

We pray to you, O Lord,  
That we may have eyes to see  
What is possible when we reach out  
Beyond fear, beyond anger,  
To hold the hand of our sisters, our brothers.

We thank you, O Lord,  
For your call and challenge to us  
That we may reveal your teachings and your love  
Through our actions to end racism  
And to proclaim that we are all your children,  
heirs to your sacred creation.

Amen.\*

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Dennis M. Schnurr

Archbishop of Cincinnati

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