

Message from Bp. James Checchio
June 4, 2020

I know these are challenging times for us personally, but also as a Church and nation. So much sadness surrounds us. Thanks be to God for our faith and daily prayer which anchors us in hope! The joys of Easter reminded us of this clearly, after the sacrifices of Lent. I've been praying for you daily, personally and for your sacred ministry which is a source of hope for our people which flows from your own conviction of Christ's triumph over death and destruction. I am heartened to hear from so many of our people about their confidence and trust they have in you; all the ways you go above and beyond for them in these difficult times. Never think your efforts for good go unnoticed!

At our recent diocesan pastoral council meeting, one of our Chinese members spoke about the suffering of the Chinese Catholic Americans springing from all the reports of the virus coming from their land of origin. They are hurting, and I am sure that many of our Asian brothers and sisters in our diocese are feeling it too. We have such a large and growing number of Asians in our diocese. Additionally, the tragic and senseless murder of George Floyd has shown to all the world the racism that our black brothers and sisters in our country experience all too often. It has been heartbreaking to see this wound torn open again. It has wisely been observed that "racism is America's original sin." It's sad, but a truth we must face.

Yesterday's Office of Readings for the Ugandan Martyrs prophetically reminded us in prayer about violence done to other Africans: "African martyrs herald the dawn of a new age. If only the mind of man might be directed not toward persecutions and religious conflicts but toward a rebirth of Christianity and civilization!" How we still need this rebirth; we must pray for it and work for it. "The infamous crime by which these young men were put to death was so unspeakable and so expressive of the times. It shows us clearly that a new people needs a moral foundation, needs new spiritual customs firmly planted, to be handed down to posterity." How we still need this moral foundation, which we must work to give birth to in our times. We value and defend every human life from conception until natural death because we know that God has made every person in His own likeness and image. Racism has no place in this new moral foundation. This is central truth of our sacred ministry to prophetically announce the Gospel message that we are all sisters and brothers in the sight of the One Father of us all.

I am attaching to this email our Holy Father's message of yesterday to us Americans. I'm certainly grateful for his intervention. So much of what we hear and read from our news outlets is so politically charged. It is difficult to know the truth of what actually is taking place as they report on different events. We do know that at the root of much of what we see is racism, bigotry, hatred and the violence that has come from the effects of our fallen nature in need of God's continuing redemptive grace. These social wounds rightly occupy so much of our prayer in these days. We must reflect deeply in prayer, inform ourselves more extensively about the social teachings of the Church and preach and teach confidently to our people so desperately in need of the Word of Life that we were ordained to bring to them. Our message has to be solidly pro-life and include all these aspects, not just focusing on one aspect or another, thus risking that we fall into the political narrative that drives so much of our media!

I also have asked that our offices provide you with some model prayers for the petitions at Mass. We certainly pray for the soul of George Floyd and all who have died as a result of racism, as well as all those who suffer as a result of this great sin, even as we pray for peace.

Know of my love and prayers. May Our Lady of Guadalupe intercede for us for the great gift of peace.

God bless,
Bishop

Message from Pope Francis

June 4, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters in the United States,

I have witnessed with great concern the disturbing social unrest in your nation in these past days, following the tragic death of Mr. George Floyd.

My friends, 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. At the same time, we have to recognize that “the violence of recent nights is self-destructive and self-defeating. Nothing is gained by violence and so much is lost.”

Today I join the Church in Saint Paul and Minneapolis, and in the entire United States, in praying for the repose of the soul of George Floyd and of all those others who have lost their lives as a result of the sin of racism. Let us pray for the consolation of their grieving families and friends and let us implore the national reconciliation and peace for which we yearn. May Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of America, intercede for all those who work for peace and justice in your land and throughout the world.

May God bless all of you and your families.