

A PASTORAL STATEMENT AGAINST RACISM, HATRED AND BIGOTRY IN OUR WORLD

August 24, 2017

Dear Parishioners and Friends of Holy Family,

We are living in very troubling times, both nationally and internationally. Hatred, racism and bigotry have been coming out of the shadows in ways that we haven't seen in this country for decades through the increased activity and visibility of white supremacists, neo-Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan. Internationally, we continue to experience terrorist attacks on innocent people in countries around the world. As Christians, we are called to be living witnesses to Christ's message and stand for a more peaceful and loving society.

All hate groups are empowered by sowing fear and terror. They seek to divide us against "the other", wanting nothing more than to make us scapegoat and hate those who are different from us. Minorities and religious groups continue to be targeted by ideological extremists in our country and abroad, with tragic consequences for untold numbers of people. This is the antithesis of the Gospel call of Jesus Christ who tells us in Matthew 25 that 'whatever we do to the stranger, we do to him.'

As leaders of Holy Family, ordained and lay, we stand together with our pope, [Archbishop Gomez](#) and other Catholic bishops, religious, civil and political leaders, and all people of good will, in stating categorically our abhorrence and rejection of any rhetoric or action that incites one group of people to diminish another for whatever reason. As Catholic Christians, we are committed to inclusivity and welcoming all to our community of faith, regardless of who they are. **Each person is made in the image and likeness of God, and is deserving of our respect and compassion.**

We categorically reject any expressions of hatred, racism, intolerance and bigotry, even towards those who are full of hate themselves. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are committed to responding to racism and bigotry with non-violence and peace, and we stand in loving solidarity with all those who are afraid or oppressed.

In 1979, the US Bishops had this to say in their Pastoral Letter on Racism:

“Racism is not merely one sin among many; it is a radical evil that divides the human family and denies the new creation of a redeemed world. To struggle against it demands an equally radical transformation, in our own minds and hearts as well as in the structure of our society.”

We have the power to create a more loving world. We must start with the conversion of our own hearts by examining how we treat those we encounter daily in our homes, schools, neighborhoods, workplaces, and parish. Do we tear down or build up those around us? It is in our own hearts and homes that we can begin to transcend division, tribalism and polarization, and come together as one human family, made in the image and likeness of God.

As leaders of this community of faith, we are committed to working to ensure that where necessary the institutional structures within which we operate as a society are transformed, so that institutional racism and bigotry no longer have a place in our country. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we must work together to build an inclusive, harmonious and peaceful world.

We invite you, your friends and family members to join us for an evening of prayer in solidarity for world peace, and to come together as one people, under God, hopeful to move from fear to friendship, for our tomorrows, and for our children:

Prayer Service for Peace
Wednesday, September 20th
7 p.m.

(More details will be forthcoming shortly)

May we be inspired by Jesus’ example of mercy, love and peace so that we can be the light of Christ to our wounded world.

In the peace of Christ,

Cambria Tortorelli
Msgr. Clement Connolly
Fr. Denis Maher
Fr. Marlon Mateo
Fr. Tri Dinh
Fr. Jim Heft

Fr. Chris Ponnet
Fr. Ron Schmidt
Fr. Tony Scannell
Deacon Jay and
Candy Krueger
Dr. Frank Montejano

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