

A DENOUNCEMENT OF RACIST VIOLENCE AND DECLARATION OF HUMAN SOLIDARITY

On a recent Creation Care conference a member asked: How can we quote Pope Francis's *Laudato Si* document saying we are '*one family and we live in a common home*' and not denounce the killing of our black brother George Floyd? How can we be silent, indifferent, and not be accomplices to this destruction of human life? The Lutheran theologian Detrick Bonhoeffer stated: "*Silence in the face of evil, is evil itself.*" Edmund Burke said: "*The only thing necessary for evil to thrive is for good people to do nothing.*"

Through the Office of Life, Peace, & Justice, we of the Creation Care Ministry, denounce all racist brutality by law enforcement or civilians as an act of violence that destroys human life and equality in our human family.

We like to repeat the phrase of *Laudato Si*, that we are all inter-connected and that we must '*hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*', the majority of our planet. Today, we hear echoed the last words of George Floyd saying '*I cannot breathe*'. Perhaps the most common of God's gifts to us is the air we breathe, and any act to keep this basic gift from another human being is a sin against all of us.

As Rev. Al Sharpton said at a commemorative celebration, "we black people have been saying in so many different ways for four hundred years, '*I cannot breathe*', because the knee of society is holding us down." We denounce any and all violent actions that destroy human life, as well as the systemic knee of our society that does not allow black and brown members of our human family to develop a just quality of life for all members of our family. When a society allows disrespect for people who are crying out for help, people who have been marginalized or discriminated against, it is allowing disrespect for God our creator, who formed all of us, including the so-called least of us. The German theologian Meister Eckhart reminds us "Every creature is a book about God."

This systemic violence militates against the common good because it develops conditions that end up destroying human life and a just quality of life. Pope Benedict XVI called these conditions "*social sin*" and Pope Francis asked that the term "*social sin*" be included in our Catholic Catechism.

One team member quoted to us the question of Jesus in chapter 25 of St. Matthew's gospel: *"Amen I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers o mine, you did for me"*. And chapter 14 of St. Luke encourages us to invite people different from us to a lunch or dinner.

So, we speak to denounce racism and all violence actions that destroy human life. We invite every human to speak in solidarity with our black and brown family members and to work for justice and equality for all members of our common home.

In this difficult time The Bishops' Committee on Black Catholics of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops offers this beautiful prayer

Wake Me Up Lord

Wake me up Lord, so that the evil of racism
finds no home within me.
Keep watch over my heart Lord,
and remove from me any barriers to your grace,
that may oppress and offend my brothers and sisters.
Fill my spirit Lord, so that I may give
services of justice and peace.
Clear my mind Lord, and use it for your glory.
And finally, remind us Lord that you said,
"blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called children of God."
Amen.