

## REFLECTION

### Holy Hour for Peace, Healing, and Change

#### Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle

June 7, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sister in Christ. On May 25<sup>th</sup>, just before his life was about to be unnecessarily and brutally taken from him on a street in Minneapolis, George Floyd cried out, “I can’t breathe”.

If you are someone who has struggled for breath because of the oppression of racism, I want you to know I see you, I hear you and I pray for you. This is not what God intended for his beloved children. As we gather here today in this Cathedral and outside, we can breathe. And we can speak. And we can pray. And we can act.

We come here to pray for peace in our local communities and throughout the country. Over the past couple of weeks, we have sadly witnessed the actions of those who chose not to pray, but rather, to use the death of George Floyd as an opportunity to destroy property, to steal, and to foster chaos and violence. These actions must be condemned.

On the other hand, we have also witnessed large gatherings of peaceful protesters, who seek to honor the memory of George Floyd and give meaning to his death by advocating for and demanding justice and meaningful change. We affirm the right to protest peacefully and to make our voices heard as a means of once again calling for an end to racism – a sin that has plagued our country for far too long.

In *Open Wide Our Hearts*, the Pastoral Letter Against Racism issued by the bishops of the United States in 2018, we read “Racism occurs

because a person ignores the fundamental truth that, because all humans share a common origin, they are all brothers and sisters, all equally made in the image of God. When this truth is ignored, the consequence is prejudice and fear of the other, and—all too often—hatred.” In our country, we have again witnessed the manifestation of prejudice, fear, and hatred.

Today we celebrate Trinity Sunday in our Church. The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, the belief in one God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, surpasses our ability to fully comprehend this reality. However, just because we can't completely understand who God is, doesn't mean we can't learn something about ourselves from this central mystery of our faith. In revealing himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God has shown himself to be a community of divine persons, equal in glory and majesty, distinct from one another, and yet united as one God.

Scripture tells us that we are created in the image and likeness of God. Each of us is unique, and we are created to live in communion with one another in a relationship of mutual love and respect which reflects our dignity as children of God. Our diversity should never be considered a problem that needs to be solved, or something that divides us. Rather, diversity should be seen as a reality that celebrates God's love in the wonder of his creation.

Therefore, we pray for healing from the wounds of sin and division. We pray for hope in a better day when we will more perfectly be the people that God has created and called us to be. We pray that our lives may reflect the love of the Holy Trinity in whose image we have been created.

We also pray for change in the structures, institutions and laws which still today offend the dignity of our common humanity. We can make a difference as individuals, as a Church, and as a community. It begins with us. And so, we pray for conversion of

minds and hearts where racist thoughts and hatred are harbored and continue to fester.

Again, we read in *Open Wide Our Hearts*, “What is needed, and what we are calling for, is a genuine conversion of heart, a conversion that will compel change, and the reform of our institutions and society. Conversion is a long road to travel for the individual. Moving our nation to a full realization of the promise of liberty, equality, and justice for all is even more challenging. However, in Christ we can find the strength and the grace necessary to make that journey.”

Therefore, we commit ourselves to taking up this journey together. We commit to listening, to educating, and to acting. As we do so, we invoke the intercession of Mary Our Blessed Mother. I ask you to silently pray as I offer the prayer found at the conclusion of *Open Wide Our Hearts*.

**Mary, friend and mother to all, through your Son,  
God has found a way to unite himself to every human being,  
called to be one people, sisters and brothers to each other.**

**We ask for your help in calling on your Son,  
seeking forgiveness for the times when we have failed  
to love and respect one another.**

**We ask for your help in obtaining from your Son  
the grace we need to overcome the evil of racism  
and to build a just society.**

**We ask for your help in following your Son,  
so that prejudice and animosity will no longer infect  
our minds or hearts but will be replaced with a love**

**that respects the dignity of each person.**

**Mother of the Church, the Spirit of your Son Jesus**

**warms our hearts:**

**Pray for us.**