Take Action: Support Policing Reforms

The tragic killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Sean Monterrosa, Elijah McClain and many others by law enforcement officers are horrific reminders of the legacy of systemic racism in the United States. Commenting on the current situation, Pope Francis said: “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.”

As people of faith who see the image of God in the lives of those killed by police, we must work in solidarity with communities of color in demanding significant reforms now.

These killings make plain the immediate need for transformational change in policing in our country. In partnership with interfaith and secular organizations, the Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology and the Ignatian Solidarity Network are calling for federal police reform legislation that addresses no-knock warrants and use of force standards. Join with others in the Ignatian family in calling on Congress to enact meaningful reforms that will protect communities of color from further police violence.

Parish Zoom Conversation on Racial Justice and Equity

On Thursday, July 16, from 3:00 – 4:30 p.m. ET, the Ignatian Solidarity Network is hosting an online workshop to explore ways that Jesuit parishes can bring racial justice work to life through reflection, conversation, prayer and action. During the session, participants will have the opportunity to:

• Hear from four Jesuit parishes about their ongoing racial justice work.
• Participate in small group reflection to assess both the barriers to action and ideas for moving forward in their communities.
• With the help of a toolkit, be invited into helping initiate and/or deepen racial justice and equity work in their communities.
• Be invited into an ongoing nationwide effort to network for racial justice and equity.

This session is intended for parishes that are not currently engaged in racial justice work or are in the initial stages. Pastors, members of pastoral councils, and parish social justice leaders are encouraged to attend the conversation.

RSVP for the Zoom conversation: https://ignatiansolidarity.wufoo.com/forms/parish-journey-for-racial-justice-and-equity/

Racism is a Sin – Black Lives Matter Signage Available.

Want to show visible support for racial justice and the Black Lives Matter Movement? Yard signs and large outdoor banners can now be ordered from the Ignatian Solidarity Network.

The back side of the signs bears the quote from Pope Francis cited in the first article in this newsletter.

TAKE ACTION

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Voices for Justice from the UCS Province

We’d like to draw your attention to two timely essays written by members of the UCS Province in response to current issues:

- Kevin Kuehl, a UCS scholastic at Bellarmine House in St. Louis, wrote in response to the Supreme Court decision announced on June 18 to uphold the validity of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. As a result of this decision, the roughly 800,000 DACA recipients who had been legally living, studying, and working in the United States are temporarily free from fear of deportation again. You can read Kevin’s essay on The Jesuit Post.

- Fr. Rafael Garcia, SJ, pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in El Paso, Texas, wrote a reflection for the Ignatian Solidarity Network in the aftermath of George Floyd’s murder. In it he writes “‘I can’t breathe’ and ‘they are going to kill me,’ are terrifying words that whether spoken out loud, written, or held in hearts, deteriorate and denigrate individuals, communities, and our planet. Many have reacted because they also feel some type of suffocation. Alarmingly, as with George Floyd’s breathless plea, this goes unnoticed day in and day out.” Read his essay on the Ignatian Solidarity Network website.

Civilize It: Dignity Beyond the Debate

The USCCB is promoting the Civilize It campaign aimed at promoting civility, clarity and compassion in the political process and civic engagement. Their new non-partisan resource calls Catholics to “bring the best of ourselves and our faith to the public square.” The resource encourages Catholics to pledge to have civility, clarity and compassion. Namely, the:

- Civility to recognize the human dignity of those with whom I disagree, treat others with respect, and rise above attacks when directed at me.
- Clarity to root my political viewpoints in the Gospel and a well-formed conscience, which involves prayer, conversation, study and listening.
- Compassion to encounter others with a tone and posture which affirms that I honor the dignity of others and invites others to do the same.

Ethically Produced Facemasks

Is your parish, school or organization looking to offer facemasks to your students, parishioners, volunteers or constituents? There is a way to provide masks that will promote safety and health AND economic justice at the same time. The Collection is a community of manufacturers in North Carolina that supports an ethical production line, meaningful jobs, and a living wage for workers. Together with partners at the Carolina Textile District, The Collection is offering “pedestrian” masks in the wake of COVID-19. The entire operation is committed to local material sourcing, environmentally conscious dyes, and recycling tons of leftover materials from the region out of the landfill stream.

The company promoting these product lines, Ethix Merch, has worked closely with the Ignatian Solidarity Network on their various shirts and printed materials. They are currently working with Jesuit and Catholic institutions to see if they can sell enough masks collectively across our institutions to significantly reduce the price. The reusable, antimicrobial fiber masks are reusable up to 75 washes. There are also options to screen print logos or embroider onto them. You can find out more about this effort and place online orders at: https://fs11.formsite.com/ET3ddV/goep0gfw46/index.html.

Also, well worth viewing is the webinar “Juneteenth: The Joy and the Wound: Witnessing America, Race, and Righteous Rage.” The session was sponsored by The Center for Equity, Justice and the Human Spirit at Xavier University of Louisiana and included two Loyola University New Orleans panelists: Dr. Nicholas Mitchell of the Jesuit Social Research Institute and Bill Quigley of the Loyola School of Law.