

Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation News

Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours



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"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."

Pope Francis

These past weeks we have witnessed thousands of peaceful protests throughout the world denouncing the sin of racism prompted by the killing of George Floyd in the USA by law enforcement. As Sister Rosie shared in her letter to the Sisters, *"It is so in keeping with our recent Chapter statements that we, as resurrection women, join to cry out with others against injustice and all that diminishes life on Earth. As Sisters of Bon Secours we cannot tolerate injustice of any kind... We all may not be able to join in the march or the protests but **we all can do something.**"* Racism is a very difficult topic to discuss, engage and address. For those of us who are white, it can elicit feelings of tension, resistance, denial, anger, fragility and more. For people of color who have borne the cross of racial injustice for centuries there is understandably deeply felt anger, grief, resentment, frustration, pain and much, much more. We stand at a pivotal moment to recommit ourselves to work for racial justice. We beg God to give us the grace to listen to our global wounds and to engage this racial justice struggle together.

July
JPIC Days of Remembrance

July 14
St. Kateri Tekakwitha
Patroness of
Ecology and the Environment



Racial Justice Terms

- **Race:** An arbitrary socio-biological category created by Europeans (white men) in the 15th century and used to assign human worth and social status with themselves as the model of humanity, with the purpose of establishing white skin access to sources of power. (Dr. Maulana Karenga)
- **Racism:** The belief that one race is superior to all the others and that this "superior" race deserves to impose its will on the others.
- **Racial Justice:** The work of eliminating racial disparities born of individual, institutional and structural racism.
- **White Privilege:** Unearned advantages that enable white people to collectively have easier and better access to quality healthcare and education, wealth-building opportunities, political power, etc. than people of color.
- **Anti-Racism:** Actively opposing institutional or structural racism by advancing changes in political, economic and social policies.
- **Implicit bias:** Unconsciously held negative associations about any given social group.
- **Ally:** A member of a privileged social group (race, gender, etc.) who works for justice and equity with members of social groups with less privilege.

"Find that 'something' that you can do to promote racial justice."

Sister Rosie Jasinski, CBS

Reflection

Understanding racial justice terms is a first step in "finding something that you can do to promote racial justice".

Become familiar with these terms. Notice when you exhibit these behaviors in yourself and/or observe them in others.

If you are white, learn more about white privilege.

If you are a person of color remember those who have worked for racial justice in the past and now in the present. Think about what you have already done. Name where you find hope in the movement for racial justice.

July 28
World Hepatitis Day

July 30
World Day Against
Human Trafficking





Paris, France



Dublin, Ireland



Edinburgh, Scotland

With audacious hope
we hold fast to the belief that
our loving God will give us
the grace to do our part
to dismantle racism forever.

Bon Secours USA Statement
Condemning the Killing of George Floyd



London, England



Baltimore, MD USA

Ways You Can Promote Racial Justice

- Make a commitment to learn about racism through books, articles, documentaries, movies and webinars. Do a Google search to find out what resources are available in your area/country. Share those resources with each other and with "audacious hope" begin to have some conversations about racism and racial justice.
- Have the bishops of your country issued pastoral letters on racism? If yes, read and reflect on them. If not, encourage your bishop and local clergy to address racism.
- Learn about the history of racism in your country. Identify examples of systemic racism in your country. Notice how you are complicit in structural racism.
- Reflect on your own social power. Does your racial identity grant you privileges or disadvantages? How?
- When a person of color tells you their experience, listen with openness and compassion rather than argue, ignore, interrupt or insist on your own opinion.
- Speak up when a white friend/relative/coworker says or acts in a problematic way rather than choose silence over action.

Black Lives Matter – But Don't All Lives Matter?

While the intention of the phrase "All Lives Matter" may be to put everyone's life on equal footing and convey a sense of unity, responding "All Lives Matter" to "Black Lives Matter" is actually more divisive than unifying. That's because it discounts and diminishes the focus on the violence and discrimination Black people face every day. Think of it this way: if you break your arm and go to the doctor and the doctor says "but all your bones matter, not just your arm." You're going to be perplexed because yes, all your bones matter but they are fine. It's your arm that needs attention. Black Lives Matter is that arm. (Semaj Mitchell)



Belgium

Sisters of Bon Secours USA Statement Condemning the Killing of George Floyd

"If we take time to listen to this nation's wounds, they tell us where to look for hope."

Reverend William J. Barber

June 1, 2020

With countless people in our nation and around the world the Sisters of Bon Secours condemn the killing of George Floyd at the hands of law enforcement and the racism that led to his death. Our nation is grievously wounded and divided by this disease we name as our nation's "original sin". The painful pangs of grief, anger and frustration that fill our hearts enable us to cry out with others against the injustice of racism that has ended the life of George Floyd and far too many other people of color in the United States of America.

We join the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) in acknowledging our own complicity in institutional racism; we ask forgiveness of our sisters and brothers of color; and pray for our nation's healing. With LCWR we pledge to raise our voices and to act now to end this scourge which has cost us so dearly.

As women of healing, who believe that the struggle for a more humane world is not an option, we re-commit ourselves to bring healing to the disease of racism in our own hearts, in our communities, our country and our world. With audacious hope we hold fast to the belief that our loving God will give us the grace to listen to our nation's wounds, to engage this struggle together and do our part to dismantle racism forever.

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In Belgium a statue of King Leopold II was removed after it was vandalized during protests. Between 1885 and 1908, King Leopold II made the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) his own private colony. He turned it into a massive labor camp, making a fortune from the rubber trade. He reigned over the mass deaths of an estimated 10 million Congolese.

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