



Statement from Bishop William A. Wack, CSC on the Death of George Floyd and Protests
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The death of George Floyd at the hands – or the knee – of a police officer in Minnesota last week is horrifying. Understandably, it has touched off a storm of protests, violent outbursts, and a new wave of anger, sadness and fear. What are we to do in the face of this? How does the Church respond? What is the Lord telling us at this moment in history?

One thing is certain: violence is abhorrent and wrong. When Peter drew a sword to defend our Lord from being taken into custody, Jesus said, “Peter, put your sword back into its sheath, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.” (Mt 26:52) Whether it is the violent manner in which Mr. Floyd died or the reckless looting and destruction and revenge that has followed, there must be a better way.

It is said that when we hear something, we do so in order to do one of two things: to respond or to listen. Right now, what is needed most is for us to listen to one another. What we are seeing, for the most part, is the pain, frustration, anger and anxiety that many, many people feel – especially those from our minority communities – as they see what is happening around them. It is difficult and painful to listen because we often want to jump in and offer excuses or blame someone or something else. We can easily point to the small number of people within the protest gatherings who are bent on anarchy and violence as a way to dismiss the message. But if we are to find any resolution, now and in the future, we must listen to one another and work together for systemic change.

Our faith teaches us that each one of us is created in the image and likeness of God. God shows no partiality or favoritism; all are equal, and all are precious in His sight. Jesus Christ taught us that the greatest commandment is twofold: Love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind; and love your neighbor as yourself. (Mt 22:37-39)

It is heartening to see images of police officers kneeling with some protesters or joining them as they march in peace together. Also, the majority of gatherings in small towns and large cities are marked by prayer, song and a sense of solidarity. Truly, we have it within us as individuals and as a nation to pursue peace and justice together.

Let us stand together against racism, against brutality, against all forms of violence, and especially against the taking of any life. We invoke the protection and intercession of Mary, our Mother: May she watch over all of her children and lead us to a more perfect communion with her Son. May God bless us so that we may be a blessing for others. Amen.

Also, see the [Statement of U.S. Bishops’ President on George Floyd and the Protests in American Cities](#) and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [Pastoral Letter Against Racism, Open Wide Our Hearts, the Enduring Call to Love](#).

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