

June 2, 2020

Racism is the original and persistent sin of the United States. Unarmed black people are killed by police authorities and armed members of the public. Say their names: George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, Tony Robinson, Trayvon Martin. So many others. We know this. We see this. We grieve. We are angry. We move on. It happens again.

Our racist system targets people of color for poverty, imprisonment, violence, and death. Primarily white institutions police black communities and communities of color. Primarily white institutions hold power in a criminal justice system that utterly fails to impose accountability on police officials and armed white citizens who kill unarmed black people. There is no justice. How, then, can there be peace?

We, the elected leadership of religious congregations of women in and around the St. Louis area, stand in unity with those who feel the rage and despair of this moment. As majority white communities in the United States, we recommit to prayer, self-examination, and advocacy. Specifically, we join with the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights in calling for fundamental reform in the way policing is done in the United States. We call for fundamental law reform to strip away protections for those who bring violence and death to unarmed black people. We call for and commit to REAL change to bring REAL peace, the peace that comes when all have enough, when all are treated with respect.

We deplore all random acts of vandalism and other acts of violence and terror. These acts do not promote peace, justice, or respect.

Every person is a precious child of God. George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, Tony Robinson, Trayvon Martin ... precious children of God.

We call for a citywide day of prayer, mourning and self-examination to be held on June 6, 2020, on racism and how we are called as individuals and a civic community to act now.

Signed, the elected leadership of the following religious congregations:

Daughters of Charity, Province of St. Louise  
Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help  
Sisters of Loretto/Loretto Community  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, South Central Leadership Team  
Sisters of the Good Shepherd Province of Mid-North America  
Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, MO  
Ursuline Sisters of the Central Province