

Statement on Racism and Death of George Floyd
Evanston Catholic Pastors

“If you’re not outraged, you aren’t paying attention.”
-Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago

The Evanston Catholic Pastoral Leaders spoke by phone to address the ongoing issues regarding the peaceful demonstrations against police violence and the murder of George Floyd. We stand with our African American sisters and brothers against the abuse of police authority. As brother priests, we are committed to serve and support all people of good will in the Evanston community and our entire nation. We lift our voices in prayer and unite our voices with all here on earth that this police abuse of power must stop now everywhere in our nation. To those who tried to make this moment something else by their violence, we unite with all who condemn them and their mask of evil which will not ever cover the true face of justice and truth. We condemn racism and violence as has been experienced recently and will promote dialogue beginning with our children and teens to forge new attitudes for a more just city and society.

“Our brother George is dead.” For those who have not heard, “Our brother George is dead.” Suffocated on a northern city street by a knee to the neck, our brother George died at the active and inactive hands of ones called to both serve and protect all citizens. Our brother George was not served or protected by an institution that treats different segments of population with different protocols, and different courtesies. Our brother George was ignored, mistreated, and abused by officers that would have acted differently if he had been white, well-dressed, well-educated, and more sober. Once again, racism rears its ugly head in our country, as it continues to stain our souls with every instance of enslavement of body, mind, opportunity, and spirit. Through our periods of slavery, the laws of Jim Crow, the terror of lynching by the KKK, we have been silent partners in new modes of enslavement.

In situations like this, we should ask, how are the gospel values relevant right here and right now for our lives? So how do we bring our Christian values into action? The nature and image of God reminds us of what type of relationship God desires for us and of us. God is community and communion. God is all just and loving. For God, love and justice go together. God sent his Son to the world not to condemn, nor to destroy, but to redeem, to heal, and to restore. God as Holy Spirit is sanctifying us and empowering us to glorify God through our actions. So, If we are all created in the image and likeness of God, we are invited here and now to be the walking image of God’s justice, peace, mercy, and love to all of those we know in person and through social media. As Cardinal Cupich said in his recent statement, “The responsibility of any neighbor, any citizen, especially those of us who profess belief in Jesus Christ, is to do the work of accompanying their brothers and sisters who carry this pain every day of their lives. That work begins by understanding that when such feelings erupt, they do not come out of nowhere. They are the consequence of centuries of national racial injustice.”

One of the most heart-wrenching aspects of our brother George's slow and inhumane torture and murder was in his last few minutes----he cried out for relief, he cried out for compassion, and he cried out for the recognition that he mattered in this country, and in this world. One of his last few cries was, "Mama." One of his last few words was, "Mama." So we pray to our Mother, our Blessed Virgin Mother Mary, she who is the Mother of our Church, and the Mother of Us All----that she may embrace our brother George in her arms, cover him with her mantle, and bring him into the presence of her son Jesus, and welcome him as a brother.

As pastors, we ensure that the respect for all human life and for all human beings is paramount in the teaching, preaching, and healing ministries within our institutions, schools, and programs. As citizens and as believers, it falls to us to clearly deliver the message to our politicians and police: "No to racism! No to violence! Things must change! We must change. We all must change."

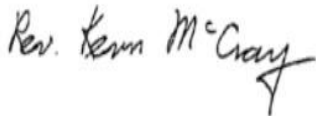
With you disciples, for you priests,



Reverend Kenneth J. Anderson
Pastor, St. Joan of Arc Parish



Reverend Hernan Cuevas
Pastor, St. Athanasius Parish



Reverend Kevin McCray
Pastor, St. Mary Parish



Reverend Joseph P. Tito
Pastor, St. Nicholas Parish

Reverend Kevin J. Feeney

Reverend Kevin Feeney
Director & Chaplain, Sheil Catholic Center

"Every upright conscience cannot but decisively condemn any racism, no matter in what heart or place it is found." -St. John Paul II