



Statement from Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago on the Death of George Floyd and the Need to Address Structural Racism

“Three hundred years of humiliation, abuse, and deprivation cannot be expected to find voice in a whisper”-Martin Luther King Jr.

As all of us grapple with the horrific death of George Floyd, the necessary protests in Chicago and across the nation, and the impact of the recent days of violence, our hearts are heavy.

Our nation’s oldest and most shameful wound has been ripped open again. Structural and deeply rooted racism underpins all that has erupted around us.

As a human service agency formed in Catholic Social Teaching, the core of our work is upholding the dignity of every human being, a belief utterly at odds with racism and police brutality, and one too often absent from the structures and policies we allow to prevail in our country and city.

Catholic Charities condemns the actions that led to George Floyd's death because they offend the dignity of every human person and respect for life in all its stages. But those horrific actions are not difficult to condemn. Also offensive to that dignity and respect for life are the extraordinary burdens and inequities—structural and casual—so carelessly put on our African American neighbors that have led to disparities in every single category of life—housing, health, education, incarceration, poverty, violence, and death.

The overdue work that needs to be done by Catholic Charities, faith leaders, and other organizations and individuals is to reform systems internally and externally. The action to change deeply entrenched practices that discriminate and dehumanize our black and brown brethren must accelerate. In social services, the job is to help those in need who are also too often unseen and unheard, knowing and demonstrating that all are equal before God. We must stand behind and support our black and brown colleagues and leaders as they share their pain and steer us forward.

It is time to move past rhetoric; it is time to actively move toward justice. Catholic Charities commits to continue that work within our organization, with Catholic Charities agencies across the nation, and in partnership with all other organizations and communities working hard for the common good. This time in history should give us resolve to unite as never before and be leaders in the fight for true equality.

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