



God Created Humankind in his Image and Likeness

Respect for the other is a must

Statement of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

It has been with great distress and sorrow that the world witnessed the tragic events that took place in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on 25 May 2020. The death of Mr. George Floyd at the hands of law enforcement officers is profoundly troubling and entirely unacceptable. The utter disregard for his human rights and dignity has justifiably raised numerous disturbing questions about the ongoing presence of racism and discrimination in our societies, as well as about how peace and good government can both avoid and deter self-destructive and self-defeating violence.

The denigration of humankind, the denial of God-given rights and of human responsibilities that flow from them, lack of love for one's neighbour, and the failure to show respect toward others are wholly intolerable; these must always be condemned in the strongest of terms. Racism and discrimination remain an appalling reality for a civilized society. The Bishops and Catholic faithful of Canada join with Pope Francis in lamenting all who have lost their lives and suffered because of exclusion, racism and violence which are antithetical to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As the Holy Father himself stated at the occasion of this tragedy: "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."¹

Every human being is created in the image and likeness of God and is precious in His eyes according to the first chapter of Genesis. This truth is for us the bedrock and foundation of all human dignity. To violate it is an offence against God Himself and against the sacredness of life. Our faith teaches us that: "Respect for the human person proceeds by way of respect for the principle that 'everyone should look upon his neighbor (without any exception) as "another self," above all bearing in mind his life and the means necessary for living it with dignity."²

In communion and solidarity with the Holy Father and the Catholic Bishops of the United States, we invite all Canadians to pray for all those who have lost their lives as a result of the sin of racism, to work for reconciliation and healing, as well as for peace and justice in our land and throughout the world.

8 June 2020

¹ Pope Francis, 3 June 2020 General Audience - <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-06/pope-francis-usa-george-floyd-protests-no-racism-violence.html>.

² *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 1931, citing the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, 27.1.