



# St. John the Evangelist Church

June 5, 2020

Dear SJE Families and Friends,

Our country is different from every country in the world. America was founded on the ideal that all “men [and women] are created equal.” We are now faced with the question, “Are we living up to this ideal?” Given what is happening in our country at this minute, precipitated by the murder of George Floyd, and unaddressed racial disparities, the answer is, unfortunately, no. Here at St. John the Evangelist, we are filled with emotions of sadness, despair, and anger. In our parish and school, black lives matter.

Discussions of race in America are not easy or simple, but just because they are not easy does not mean we should not have them. Here at St. John the Evangelist, we believe we are all God’s children, and we strive to live by that every day. As Catholics, we are called to love our neighbors as ourselves and recognize and respect the dignity each person has, being created in the image and likeness of God.

At SJE, as a faith community, we must hold ourselves accountable for our words and actions. We are called to see Christ in each of our brothers and sisters. Sometimes, we fail to live up to our ideals, but that does not diminish them or us. However, when we fail, we must acknowledge our mistakes and seek God’s forgiveness and grace.

It is hard but necessary to teach our children about brutality and racism. As a school family, we will stand up to injustices everywhere. We are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all of our students. We are committed to addressing this issue with our students. We are committed to standing against those who discriminate and oppress and stand for those who work for justice and equality.

Our shepherd, Archbishop Wilton Gregory, spoke about George Floyd and racism in his Pentecost sermon. If you have not already seen it, it is worth reading:

<https://cathstan.org/news/us-world/archbishop-gregorys-statement-on-death-of-george-floyd-and-the-aftermath-of-the-nationwide-protests>

There are many resources for talking to your children about racism and injustice, some of which are provided below:

- Activities from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops  
<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/educational-resources-on-racism.cfm>

- Parental toolkit-Talking to children about racism  
<https://www.parenttoolkit.com/social-and-emotional-development/advice/social-awareness/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-race-and-racism>
- *Everyone Belongs*, a children's book on the reality of racism and our Catholic response <https://store.loyolapress.com/everyone-belongs>
- Sesame Street and CNN are teaming up on Saturday, June 6 at 10:00am for a town hall meeting to discuss racism:  
<https://www.yahoo.com/entertainment/sesame-street-cnn-host-town-hall-racism-protests-george-floyd-200328024.html>

Cardinal Patrick O'Boyle championed civil rights as the Archbishop of Washington from 1947–1973. He supported and encouraged the March on Washington and offered the following during his invocation on that August day in 1963:

“Send in our midst the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of all to the great truth that all men are equal in Your sight. Let us understand that simple justice demands that the rights of all be honored by every man.”

The community members of St. John the Evangelist are committed to living the Gospel in our everyday lives. We stand together in our love for each other. Come, Holy Spirit, and renew the face of the Earth.

In Christ's Peace,



Father Joseph A. Calis  
Pastor



Margaret Durney  
Principal