



Diocese of Davenport

Office of the Bishop

August 31, 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

There have been a series of recent incidents locally and nationally where racism has been expressed verbally and violently. White supremacist, KKK and Neo-Nazi groups have spoken of hatred of others, and their words and actions have led to injury and death in Charlottesville, Virginia, and fear in many other communities, including here in the Diocese of Davenport.

Our first response to hatred and violence should be prayer. In light of these recent incidents of violence and racial tension, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has invited all the dioceses in the country to unite in a Day of Prayer for Peace in Our Communities on September 9. I encourage you to join me that day in reciting the prayer below in your families and parishes.

Beyond prayer, I invite all of us to learn more about racism. Prejudice can lurk unnoticed in our minds and hearts. It can feed on the fear of what is different and grow into overt racism. Our Social Action Office can provide resources to help us learn more about this topic.

Beyond prayer and learning, please consider becoming actively involved in your community. Gathering together with people from other faiths and all people of goodwill conveys to everyone in the community that all members have a right to be and to feel safe and secure.

I am heartened that the president of the USCCB has appointed a new ad hoc committee which will focus on "addressing the sin of racism in our society, and even in our Church, and the urgent need to come together as a society to find solutions."

May our prayer, learning and action lead to a greater recognition among all people that every single person is made in the image and likeness of God, and hence has intrinsic dignity. May racism eventually and finally be totally eradicated in our hearts, country, Church and world.

Let us pray . . . O Lord our God, in your mercy and kindness, no thought of ours is left unnoticed, no desire or concern ignored. You have proven that blessings abound when we fall on our knees in prayer, and so we turn to you in our hour of need. Surrounded by violence and cries for justice, we hear your voice telling us what is required . . . "Only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Mi 6:8). Fill us with your mercy so that we, in turn, may be merciful to others. Strip away pride, suspicion, and racism so that we may seek peace and justice in our communities. Strengthen our hearts so that they beat only to the rhythm of your holy will. Flood our path with your light as we walk humbly toward a future filled with encounter and unity. Be with us, O Lord, in our efforts, for only by the prompting of your grace can we progress toward virtue. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sincerely in Christ,

+ *Thomas Zinkula*

Most Rev. Thomas Zinkula
Bishop of Davenport