

March 8, 2021

Dear Nolan Catholic Community,

"The Church reproves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against men and women or harassment of them because of their race, color, condition of life, or religion." These words, written at the Second Vatican Council in the Declaration entitled, *Nostra Aetate*, articulate concisely the teaching of the Church against the sin of racism in conformity with the heart and mind of Jesus Christ.

At Nolan Catholic, we continue to live out our mission as being a ministry of the Diocese of Fort Worth providing a college preparatory education and evangelizing students to be tomorrow's leaders through education in faith, formation in hope, and perseverance in charity in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church. Thus, whenever we encounter words and actions that manifest interior dispositions that are contrary to the Gospel and an affront to human dignity it is our responsibility to educate and to take corrective actions for the sake of the education and human formation of our students, their families, and of our entire community.

I would like to specifically address racial insults that have occurred on the Nolan Catholic campus. Over the past month, two incidents have occurred involving social media and the use of a racial slur used by a few of our freshmen students. In accordance with our handbook, we responded immediately with initial steps to address the grave wrongdoing, respond to the harm of the African American student most immediately offended, and began a process of correction, education, and hopefully, reconciliation and healing of the broader community in accord with the teaching of the Gospel. We have responded to each situation promptly and individually addressed each of the families and students involved with gradual and due process resulting in punitive and corrective measures for the students most directly involved.

At the end of the 2019-2020 school year, we began to research and find ways to establish a presence and address cultural diversity, racial injustices, and discrimination on the Nolan Catholic campus. We were blessed to partner with two alumnae: one in which provided initial training for our staff this school year; and the other is an active member of our Advisory Council and is helping to strategize, organize, and launch a two-year plan with next steps in providing guidance and action steps for a formal program.

We have engaged in conversations with dedicated parents and alumni who have offered suggestions and contacts for diversity trainings and we are actively seeking the best Catholic formation program to educate our staff, students, and families to build awareness of unconscious bias, cultural competence, and authentic diversity training. We have identified the following steps to move forward towards a strategic plan in diversity training:

1. Inform our community of the concerns.
2. Invite Bishop Olson to speak on racial injustices and our Catholic responsibility for the dignity of human life.
3. Designate a group of stakeholders vested in Nolan Catholic to serve on a steering committee as a sub-committee from our Advisory Council, to help with next steps in receiving training from a professional organization and working the material into a program that incorporates our Catholic values as appropriate for students, staff, and families. This team will undergo a research-style investment of time becoming the trainers of the individualized program. We will begin with the Intercultural Competencies Training program from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.
4. Implement curriculum training options for staff, students, and families beginning Fall 2021.

We emphasize that racism is a sin that is both individual and social. We understand that our serious responsibility is to combat racism with the light of the Gospel articulated by faith and right reason expressed through word and action. This work is ongoing, and our learning environment is a great part of our investment in Catholic school education, we will continue to actively participate in all efforts and endeavor to meet the challenge of engaging honest, productive discussions and actions that lead to effective, meaningful and sustained outcomes to lead and form developing minds that live and act in accordance with the Gospel. We are committing to communicate our progress of our plan through email updates and eventually our website. My door is open to anyone wanting to discuss solutions or initiatives to help move us forward. Please pray for the community of Nolan Catholic High School and especially for those harmed by racism.

Prayerfully yours,



Leah Rios