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Bishop Michael C. Barber, SJ: statement on guilty verdict in trial of Derek Chauvin

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Today's verdict offers our country an opportunity to face the horrific evil inflicted by the sin of racism.

While the trial of Derek Chauvin has finished and our justice system moves forward, we must still face the reality that racism is not finished. I fear there will be more killings of African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, Latin Americans, indeed any refugee or migrant seeking peace and a better life here.

These are our sisters and brothers. The evil of racism must stop.

It will only stop if each one of us makes a deep commitment to conversion.

As my brother bishops wrote last May, "Racism is not a thing of the past or simply a throwaway political issue to be bandied about when convenient. It is a real and present danger that must be met head on. As members of the Church, we must stand for the more difficult right and just actions instead of the easy wrongs of indifference. We cannot turn a blind eye to these atrocities and yet still try to profess to respect every human life. We serve a God of love, mercy, and justice.

"As we said ... in our most recent pastoral letter against racism, *Open Wide Our Hearts*, for people of color some interactions with police can be fraught with fear and even danger. People of good conscience must never turn a blind eye when citizens are being deprived of their human dignity and even their lives.

Indifference is not an option. "As bishops, we unequivocally state that racism is a life issue."

I echo the prayer of the bishops of Minnesota that was released today, in which they said, "Let us pray that through the revelation of so much pain and sadness, that God strengthens us to cleanse our land of the evil of racism which also manifests in ways that are hardly ever spoken, ways that never reach the headlines. Let us then join in the hard work of peacefully rebuilding what hatred and frustration has torn down.

This is the true call of a disciple and the real work of restorative justice. Let us not lose the opportunity to pray that the Holy Spirit falls like a flood on our land again, as at Pentecost, providing us with spiritual, emotional, and physical healing, as well as new ways to teach, preach, and model the Gospel message in how we treat each other.