

Resolution for 2021– 2022

Confronting Racism with a Franciscan Heart

Franciscan Federation - Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission

Sister Maryann Agnes Mueller CSSF, Chair

Statement of Resolution

We, the members of the Franciscan Federation, renounce the sin of racism and recognize our complicity. We are deeply troubled by the acts of hate, discrimination, inequity, oppression. We recognize our call to be peacemakers, transforming the difficulties, tragedies and acts of violence into peace.

Rationale

Saint Francis reminds us in his admonitions (Admonitions: 13 and 27) that “We must learn to all people with dignity as our equals, created in the image of God. We must be willing to love them as our neighbor, to love them as we love ourselves and indeed to do unto them as we would have done to us.”

Where there is charity and wisdom, there is neither fear nor ignorance.

Where there is patience and humility, there is neither anger nor disturbance.

Where there is mercy and discernment,

there is neither excess nor hardness of heart. (Adm 27)

In “FRATELLI TUTTI”, Pope Francis reminds us: “Saint Francis of Assisi addressed his brothers and sisters and proposed to them a way of life marked by the flavor of the Gospel. Of the counsels Francis offered, I would like to select the one in which he calls for a love that transcends the barriers of geography and distance, and declares blessed all those who love their brother “as much when he is far away from him as when he is with him”. In his simple and direct way, Saint Francis expressed the essence of a fraternal openness that allows us to acknowledge, appreciate and love each person, regardless of physical proximity, regardless of where he or she was born or lives.” (1)

“A readiness to discard others finds expression in vicious attitudes that we thought long past, such as racism, which retreats underground only to keep reemerging. Instances of racism continue to shame us, for they show that our supposed social progress is not as real or definitive as we think.” (20)

“Racism is a virus that quickly mutates and, instead of disappearing, goes into hiding, and lurks in waiting.” (97)

In *LAUDATO SI'*, Pope Francis draws a connection between praising the God of creation and recognizing our duty to care for each other by caring for the planet, “our common home.” But the core of Francis’s message is even more challenging. He argues that praising the God of creation includes being willing to challenge and transform systems, institutions, and our own patterns of

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comfort and consumption that fail to respect our duty to care for the planet and for each other. “Human life is itself a gift,” he says, “which must be defended from various forms of debasement.”

CALL TO RESPOND / CALL TO ACTION

In order to respond with concrete intention, let our Call to Action be a collective Franciscan voice to respond as peacemakers as we confront Racism with a Franciscan Heart. We propose that all Franciscans and Franciscan Hearted People join the Franciscan Federation and the Franciscan Action Network to take at least one action to confront racism.

For personal reflection, sharing and action steps:

1. What have I done to undo racism in myself?
2. If Caucasian: How do I benefit from White Privilege? What can people with privilege do that people without privilege can't?
3. Advocate for and support criminal justice reform, demilitarization of police, and decriminalization of behaviors such as loitering and minor traffic violations, and ending stop-and-frisk.
4. Use your vote: call, write your representatives in Congress and ask what they are doing to address racism and vote for the Candidate that supports your views.
5. Take the Implicit Bias Test <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

What to Watch / What to Read:

- Rosa Parks – The First Lady of the Civil Rights Movement
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMDWzLvpkCM>
- Freedom Riders: The powerful, harrowing and ultimately inspirational story of six months in 1961 that changed America forever. See link below:
<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/freedomriders/>
- Read a copy of Peggy McIntosh's "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack":
<https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mcintosh.pdf>
- White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism by Robin J. DiAngelo and Michael Eric Dyson
- Racial Justice and the Catholic Church by Bryan Massingale
- America's Original Sin by Jim Wallis
- The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander
- View the movie Just Mercy
- Bryan Massingale on Racism and White Privilege
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONiie2oYJCQ>