



DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

• P.O. Box 230, Wheeling, WV 26003 •

Statement from Most Reverend Mark E. Brennan, Bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

Monday, June 1, 2020

Let Us Unite in Prayer for Peace

The killing of George Floyd was an egregious act of violence with no justification whatsoever, all the worse for having been perpetrated by some police officers who are sworn to serve and protect their fellow citizens. Most law enforcement officials are decent men and women who train hard to restrain any violent impulses and to be respectful as they deal with the public. Mr. Floyd did not meet that kind of police officer the day he was killed.

I join other Americans in prayer for Mr. Floyd, his family and friends and for the African American community of Minneapolis and throughout our country. Every human being is made in God's image and likeness and deserves respect and fair treatment. The protests taking place in many US cities reflect the anger and frustration of millions of Americans who, to this day, experience racism in their daily lives. If I find abhorrent the resurgence of the ugly language, violence and racial discrimination I witnessed as a child, with how much more right do African Americans react against it! We American bishops addressed the issue of enduring racism in our society in our Pastoral Letter, *Open Wide Our Hearts*, in November, 2018 (usccb.org website). I urge you to read it.

The justified protests currently underway must not be tainted by those who wish to spread violence or ruin the livelihoods of their neighbors. Such acts do not advance the cause of racial equality and respect for the human dignity of all. Pope St. Paul VI said, "If you want peace, work for justice." Injuries to persons and destruction of property are not the work of justice and will not bring peace.

Let us honor George Floyd and others who have died in similar incidents by working for true justice and an America in which, as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, a person is "judged not by the color of his skin but by the content of his character."

Most Reverend Mark E. Brennan
Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston