

WASHINGTON D.C. – National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM) issues statement on racism, a systemic issue receiving more attention due to protests around the country after the death of Mr. George Floyd.

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God.
Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love.

(1 John 4:7-8)

[Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love](#), a pastoral letter against racism released by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in 2018, states, “Almost every day, news headlines demonstrate that our country’s “original sin” of racism continues to impact the lives of many Americans, many of them Catholic—particularly those who belong to the African American, Hispanic/Latino, or Native American communities. There are signs that racism’s legacies remain prevalent in many systemic inequalities that have deep impact on people of color.”

Racism is a sin. It is still very present today, demonstrated in the recent deaths of Mr. George Floyd and Mr. Ahmaud Arbery, among many other African Americans. The leadership, members, and staff of NFCYM extend our deepest sorrows to their families, and to all who have lost someone as a result of racism. We share in the deep grief and just anger felt by so many upon witnessing these horrendous acts. As Christians, we are called to love and respect the dignity of each person. Racism, in any form, is in direct opposition to our call to follow Christ and we stand against this injustice.

The vision of NFCYM refers to a future where the “diverse realities of young people are welcomed in Catholic faith communities.” To create this future, we must first listen to the experiences and perspectives of those who experience racism. Open and honest dialogue can be difficult, but it is the only way forward. As an organization that has influence on the lives of young Catholics, we stand with our membership to model Christ to the young as we join in with their voices, and the voices of their peers to eradicate all injustices, specifically racism, in the world.

Once we gain the perspective of our brothers and sisters experiencing racism, we need to look closely at ourselves, our families, and our immediate ministry settings. We must reflect on how we are loving and respecting the dignity of others, especially our black brothers and sisters. And we must be willing to step out boldly and ask our community to hold us accountable when we are not.

Finally, we must ask God where we are being called to act. As Pope Francis stated, “we cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life.” We must discern how we can help defend our brothers and sisters in Christ when we witness injustice and racism. And we must ask what discussions we need to have or plans we must put in place to prevent racist acts in the future.

We reject the sin of racism, in all its forms, within our organization, and we stand with our brothers and sisters who have felt marginalized and ignored inside and outside of our Church. We commit ourselves, as an organization, and call on our members to dive into the process outlined above to continue our individual pursuits of sainthood and the collective pursuit of unity. We pray for and will work towards an end to the systemic issue of racism in our country, and the whole world. For our world, but most importantly, for our young people, we pledge to be faithful witnesses of Christ’s hopeful light in a world eclipsed by darkness, beginning with listening to our members.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love.

For (Christ) is our peace, he who made both one and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through his flesh...
that he might create in himself one new person in place of the two, thus establishing peace.”

(Eph 2: 14-15)