

**MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY**  
**DEPAUL UNIVERSITY: June 9, 2020**

We write today with one voice, as an institution inspired by Vincent de Paul, that is committed to racial equality and justice and upholding the dignity of all people. As a community, we are mourning; we are bone-weary, and yes, angry at the senseless killings of African Americans across this nation and in our own City of Chicago. We applaud and support the demonstrators who are marching to end the violence and working toward structural reform. We are horrified at the images of these same protestors being met with tear gas, rubber bullets and hostility, and we denounce those who disrupt peaceful demonstrations with unlawful actions.

Racism is woven into the fabric of this country. It is the legacy of slavery, colonization, and the taking by force of lands and peoples to create power and privilege for some while marginalizing many. Despite the efforts of many, the principle objectives of the past decades to combat racism and racial discrimination have not been attained and to the present day, countless human beings continue to be victims of racism, racial discrimination, and related intolerance.

The current uprising of people is the cumulative effect of this oppression. COVID-19 struck black and brown communities hard, and essential workers were the most vulnerable amongst us. The pandemic made clear that these inequities are part of the United States ethos, structurally reinforced in our political, health care, judicial, economic, and educational systems.

DePaul, as an institution, is part of these systems. We know that statements are not enough. Words must be followed by action. We cannot look at the world and say it needs to change, and not seek to transform systems of racial inequality within our own institution. We heard this message loud and clear, and take this moment to look to the future and what must be done to make DePaul a more just and equitable university that lives out its mission in deed, as well as word.

Fully aware that the scourge of racism and racial discrimination persists and continues to result in violations of human rights, suffering, disadvantage, violence and death, we want to commit – as an institution – to combat racism by all available and appropriate means, and as a matter of the highest priority, preferably in continuous cooperation with affected communities.

As a collective administrative body, we have come together to outline our commitments to end racism on our campus.

- We commit to work with students, staff, and faculty to address structural racism within our university;
- We will create a scholarship program with expanded resource opportunities that remembers all black lives taken by acts of racial violence. The Emmett Till Scholarship will remember all Black American lives lost to racial violence and be awarded to students with majors and minors in Applied Diplomacy and African and Black Diaspora Studies;
- We will encourage each college and division to host anti-racist conversations next year and commit to joining these conversations;

- We will ask each college to initiate or enhance curricula building understanding and empathy for peoples impacted by racism;
- We will provide anti-racism training for our community;
- We will collaborate with local organizations to support their work of creating equitable environments and access to those affected by racism's legacy;
- We will enhance and strengthen existing diversity, equity and inclusion programs and initiatives;
- We will audit our own processes and procedures for practices of exclusion and structural racism;
- We will collaborate with Inside Out Prison Exchange Program faculty to enhance educational opportunities to the incarcerated, as we know that the incarcerated are disproportionately African American; and
- We will prioritize justice and systemic change through a Vincentian lens as we review and potentially revise the DePaul mission statement during the 2020-21 school year.

We will do all of this in love, and with our Vincentian values to guide us, respecting the God-given dignity of every person.

We ask our community to join us in a blackout on June 9, 2020, at 8:19 p.m. to 8:27 pm. We ask that wherever you may be, please shut down and go dark for 8 minutes and 46 seconds in remembrance of George Floyd's death and in solidarity with all who have stepped forward to stand against racism.

We sign this as a collective to demonstrate this commitment. We ask every member of our community to join us in this struggle to transform our university, to end hatred and racism, and to work together on reform. This is our promise and our mandate.

May God bless you during these troubling times and keep you safe.

Sincerely,

A. Gabriel Esteban, PhD, President

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