

## A MESSAGE FROM RON LABUGUEN, PRESIDENT OF OUR PASTORAL COUNCIL

*It has been several weeks now since the deaths of George Floyd, Breanna Taylor, and Ahmaud Aubrey spurred widespread demonstrations against police brutality. After thoughtful and prayerful deliberation, the Pastoral Council of St. Teresa's Parish wrote the following statement expressing our views on this issue, and our hope that our parish can respond, both individually as parishioners and collectively as a community, to address racial injustice as we continue to build God's kingdom on earth. The Pastoral Council welcomes your feedback on this statement and/or suggestions for further action at: [PastoralCouncil@StTeresaSF.org](mailto:PastoralCouncil@StTeresaSF.org)*

### **Statement of the Pastoral Council of St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Church San Francisco, California on the Unjust Deaths of George Floyd and Others, and Our Call to Confront Racism, Oppression, and Injustice**

The tragic and unjust deaths of George Floyd, Breanna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, and the loss of too many other Black Lives are a brutal and haunting reminder of the pervasiveness of the sins of racism, discrimination, and oppression of people of color. Outrage over this has ignited demonstrations against racism and police brutality the likes of which has not been seen for many years. It has accelerated much needed conversations on racial injustice and prompted a national examination of conscience, both individually and as a society. We denounce these unjust killings and mourn the tragic loss of these lives. As we do so, we resolve as Catholic Christians to take action to prevent more of these deaths in the future by combatting racism, discrimination, and oppression. As Pope Francis said, "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."

Historically, the parish of St. Teresa's has been committed to responding to the needs of the community, especially the oppressed, through acts of social justice.

**St. Teresa's Parish continues to hold a strong commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. We are working internally to deepen our commitment to racial equity within our parish community and ministries. We strive to welcome and serve the diverse population of our community, especially those most impacted by social, economic and environmental injustices.**

As our Parish Mission states:

*"As members of St. Teresa's Parish, we fulfill our Baptismal Commitment by being the heart and hands of Christ in our world, accepting the human dignity of all persons, and advocating for and serving those who are oppressed in our society. We find the strength to fulfill our Baptismal commitment by praying, celebrating the Eucharist, building personal relationships, and acting for justice."*

In line with our Parish Mission, we call upon individuals in our parish, our parish as a whole, our leaders in the Church, and Christians everywhere to uphold the sanctity of Black Lives and to make a commitment to address the issues of racism, oppression and injustice, as we give witness to the Gospel.

The ways in which racism permeates the fundamental structures of our society are numerous and complex. This makes the work of fighting racism hard and daunting. Fortunately, as Catholic Christians, we believe that we are not alone. As the children of God, now more than ever is the time for us to come together as the Body of Christ to do this important work. Let us place our trust in God the Father, follow the teachings and life of Jesus Christ, and pray for the Holy Spirit to guide our actions and our words.

By doing so, we will strive to make progress to build upon our church vision as a warm, welcoming, inclusive faith community, and to build the Kingdom of God on Earth by bringing justice into our world.

The Pastoral Council welcomes your feedback on this statement and/or suggestions for further action at [PastoralCouncil@StTeresaSF.org](mailto:PastoralCouncil@StTeresaSF.org)