



June 5, 2020

Dear friends,

“Urged by the love of Christ and of our sisters and brothers, we work actively toward enhancing just structures that foster fullness of life and toward changing unjust structures that inhibit it.”
- SSND Shalom International Document

“I can’t breathe.”

George Floyd’s unanswered cry for help sickens and maddens us all. We cannot unhear those words. We cannot unsee the senseless killing of an unarmed black man by the Minneapolis police. The School Sisters of Notre Dame Central Pacific Province grieve this callous disregard for human life and dignity. We pray for his family and all who are hurting and echo their urgent cry for justice.

The death of Mr. Floyd is a specific tragedy in a specific place, but the circumstances are all too familiar to people in Milwaukee, St. Louis, Dallas, and everywhere similar acts of violence and the callous disregard for people of color have been perpetrated.

As School Sisters of Notre Dame, we believe all people are made in the image and likeness of God. We believe local policies and practices that promote or perpetuate racial bias must be challenged and changed.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality.” Until we truly embrace the belief that we are all united, we will not have justice, we will not have true peace.

True peace is not about an absence of conflict; it requires right relationships. It requires a recognition that all are equal. It requires a system that supports and reinforces that recognition. Decades of segregation, discrimination and racial injustice, manifesting in poverty, police brutality, poor education and economic opportunities, poor health care and unsafe streets, must be addressed and painstakingly dismantled. Until there is justice, our communities will never know a true peace. **We can and must do better.**

The School Sisters of Notre Dame Central Pacific Province pledge to pray, speak out, educate, advocate, and take decisive action in collaboration with others to establish justice. This reflects God’s abundant love and desire that all may have life. May the tragic death of George Floyd and all who have died from the violence of injustice energize our collective resolve to collaborate with others in dismantling racism locally and throughout our world.

The Central Pacific Provincial Council:

Sister Deb Sciano, Sister Dawn Achs, Sister Mary Kay Brooks, Sister Christine Garcia, Sister Helen Jane Jaeb, Sister Anna Marie Reha and Sister Lynne Schmidt