



SISTERS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD
NATIONAL ADVOCACY CENTER
Rise Up AND Act for Justice

Press Release: November 15, 2016

**National Advocacy Center Joins Catholic Organizations –
We Cry Out for Racial Justice!**

**Statement by Larry Couch
Director of National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd**

We see our history and what is happening even today. We hear the pleas of our brothers and sisters. We too are crying out for racial justice. Rise up and act for justice with us!

Last evening, America's bishops gathered at St. Peter Claver church in the seemingly forgotten area of Baltimore. They joined in the celebration of Mass and in solidarity with those Catholics, those Americans, those undocumented of color.

The founder of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd stated that each person is worth the whole world. Unfortunately, because of personal and institutional racism, we often fail to recognize the infinite value of each person.

At a time of rising racial tension in our nation, we, as staff of the National Advocacy Center, re-commit ourselves to opposing racism in all its forms. With renewed energy, we will seek reform in our criminal justice system and in our immigration system. We oppose disparate sentencing based on race. We oppose denying admittance of refugees based on their religion. In terms of immigration, with Pope Francis we will work to build bridges not walls. We pledge to continue to bring the human dimension to the political discussion.

Today, the Catholic community released a statement against racial injustice that may be found at the end of this release.

The National Advocacy Center offers education through processes and strategies that address social justice issues and advocates for the transformation of society to the benefit of all people. The center reflects the spirituality, history and mission of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, working in solidarity with the disenfranchised - particularly families, women, and children.

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WE CRY OUT FOR RACIAL JUSTICE IN THE UNITED STATES!

As Catholic organizations committed to building God's beloved community we confess our own complicity and that of our organizations and our Catholic Church in the institutional racism that continues to plague our society. We have failed our black and brown brothers and sisters. We are guilty of both conscious and unconscious discrimination and acknowledge that we have manifested racist attitudes and behaviors in our personal lives and in the structures, policies, practices and procedures of our organizations.

As organizations, we have been moved by the courage of high school and college students, parents, professional athletes, and others in local communities large and small who have taken a bold stand for racial justice. We support your commitment to justice and thank you for taking nonviolent action that has sparked important conversations about our struggle to recognize and value the dignity of each and every person in our society.

We thank you for inviting us to reclaim the values of human dignity and equality that are the foundation of our country. We admire your courage and creativity and for the challenge you offer to each of us. We know that Jesus modeled even greater courage and love for all, even his enemies. We pray for the strength to commit to living more fully the nonviolent love of Jesus especially in light of the racial and systemic injustice that continues to plague our communities.

We invite our communities to seriously reflect on making a commitment to 1) participate in racial solidarity training; 2) create spaces for truth and reconciliation in our homes, organizations, and parishes; 3) engage in training in nonviolent conflict transformation; 4) promote programs of unarmed civilian peacekeepers in our communities; and 5) require substantive ongoing de-escalation training for police officers.

It is time for a new paradigm that values cooperation instead of competition; that prizes transparent communication, accountability, shared power, and responsibility; and encourages holistic thinking that welcomes all points of view.

To you our brothers and sisters who resist the misuse of power—continue to demonstrate, to dialogue, and to embrace nonviolent action to bring attention to the injustices that have become too much a part of the fabric of our American way of life. We stand with you.

Adorers of the Blood of Christ, U.S. Region
Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
Conference of Major Superiors of Men
Faith in Public Life, Catholic Program
Franciscan Action Network
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Missionaries of the Precious Blood Kansas City Province
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
Pax Christi International
Pax Christi USA
Provincial Council Clerics of St. Viator
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas' Extended Justice Team