



June 6, 2020

Dear friends of God,

Last weekend we began the public celebration of Mass once again. We are taking pretty strict precautions to keep us all safe. I want to thank you for your patience during this time of transition. We are Eucharistic people and I have missed being with you at the Lord's Supper. We will continue in a very safe way to celebrate Mass at our traditional times during the week and on the weekend.

It was fitting to begin to celebrate Mass again on Pentecost during this most challenging time. We are people of the Spirit. God is always with us, and we can easily reach out to God when we struggle, and these are certainly times of struggle. Of course, we have been grappling with the worldwide pandemic. This pandemic has affected us in so many ways. We are losing people that we love; we have been living under a "stay at home" order and many have lost their jobs. The love of God is in our midst throughout these trials. As people of faith, we are called by God to share this love with each other and those in our world.

This last week more turmoil began to bubble up after the killing of an African-American man, George Floyd in Minneapolis. This killing has revealed the pain that so many of our African-American brothers and sisters live with. We are a nation in need of racial reconciliation. We have not dealt properly with America's "Original Sin" of racism.

In 2018 the bishops of the United States produced a letter titled [Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love - A Pastoral Letter Against Racism](#). I am guessing that most of us have never read it, and we might even be surprised to know that our bishops write letters at all about what is going on in the world. To be honest, I had not read this letter, but I am now. In it, they offer wisdom such as

Racism arises when—either consciously or unconsciously—a person holds that his or her own race or ethnicity is superior, and therefore judges persons of other races or ethnicities as inferior and unworthy of equal regard. When this conviction or attitude leads individuals or groups to exclude, ridicule, mistreat, or unjustly discriminate against persons on the basis of their race or ethnicity, it is

sinful.

Racist acts are sinful because they violate justice. They reveal a failure to acknowledge the human dignity of the persons offended, to recognize them as the neighbors Christ calls us to love (Mt 22:39).

The bishops have called us to conversion. As Catholics, we need to be a part of a renewal of our nation and our world. We need to be men and woman of love who share God's love and presence with all people.

The bishop's letter calls us to conversion and responsibility for our brothers and sisters:

What is needed, and what we are calling for, is a genuine conversion of heart, a conversion that will compel change, and the reform of our institutions and society.

Conversion is a long road to travel for the individual. Moving our nation to a full realization of the promise of liberty, equality, and justice for all is even more challenging. However, in Christ we can find the strength and the grace necessary to make that journey.

In this regard, each of us should adopt the words of Pope Francis as our own: let no one "think that this invitation is not meant for him or her." All of us are in need of personal, ongoing conversion. Our churches and our civic and social institutions are in need of ongoing reform. If racism is confronted by addressing its causes and the injustice it produces, then healing can occur. In that transformed reality, the headlines we see all too often today will become lessons from the past.

This weekend we celebrate our parish feast day of the Most Holy Trinity. As Holy Trinity Parish, we are to live God's Triune life: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is not just using theological gymnastics to try to understand God. It is about living what God is: Love. God is the love of the Father and the Son flowing through the Holy Spirit. Because of this, we are to become a community of love allowing our love to flow in the woundedness of our world.

This means that we all have a responsibility to transform division and hate and to heal the wounds of racism. May God always show us the way to be a community of love as Holy Trinity Parish.

Much love

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "F. Ken" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.