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**A Pastoral Letter from Presiding Bishop George R. Lucey, FCM,  
on the Sin of Racism**

Racism is a terrible sin, founded on the pernicious falsehood that some human beings are inferior simply because of the color of their skin and hence are undeserving of respectful and fair treatment.

It is both dismaying and disheartening that such an obvious statement should have to be made in the year 2018. But reported comments by Donald Trump, some uttered in June 2017 and others just this week, clearly indicate that even the leader of the United States is susceptible to the spiritual poison of racism.

The president's remarks are especially troubling because they implicitly bestow a stamp of approval upon racist sentiments, expressions, and behavior. This encourages—or at least fails to discourage—similar responses from his constituents. This is far from good leadership.


There can be no doubt that racism is contrary to Judeo-Christian values. The book of Genesis tells us (1:26) that God created humans in his own image, thereby bestowing on each and every member of the human family intrinsic dignity and value. Our Lord underscores this point when he tells us that, “as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did it to me.” (Mt 25:40)

In *Gaudium et spes* (27.1), the Vatican-II Council affirmed the Lord's teaching that all persons are equal in the eyes of God and should be treated with fairness and respect. “This council lays stress on reverence for humans; everyone must consider their every neighbor without exception as another self, taking into account first of all their lives and the means necessary to living them with dignity.”

In his essay “The Weight of Glory,” the 20<sup>th</sup>-century Anglican author C.S. Lewis made a similar point when he wrote that none of us has ever met an “ordinary” person; each individual, by virtue of his or her likeness to God, is “extraordinary” and deserving of our respect.

It is my fervent prayer that all Christians—and, indeed, peoples of all or no faith—examine their consciences to discern whether and to what extent they harbor racist sentiments. Let us pray for one another, and especially for Donald Trump, with God’s help, we may learn to judge others by the content of their characters and not the color of their skins. This was the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It is mine as well, and I believe it is also the Lord’s.

Signed on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Most Reverend George R. Lucey, FCM". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Most Reverend George R. Lucey, FCM  
Presiding Bishop