A Nonviolent Response to Racism

We belong to a global community, so everything is interconnected. Our hearts are heavy as we witnessed the killing of George Floyd—on our TV screens and on social media—in the hands of those who have been tasked to maintain peace and security in our community. The world is appalled and greatly saddened at the continuing racism in America, in spite of the gains achieved by the civil rights movement over 50 years ago. The widespread protests all over the United States and in many parts of the world is indicative of the sense of solidarity we are experiencing with our brothers and sisters over racism and injustice.

This is happening to a country in the midst of a pandemic which has resulted in more than 100,000 deaths, millions of unemployed, the closure of countless businesses, and the inability to put food on the table for many. With a heightened feeling of anxiety, frustration and loss of hope in the backdrop, the George Floyd incident brought people together in peaceful protest, while angry rioters caused violence and destruction, making attempts for a peace difficult at this time.

In his general audience recently, Pope Francis prayed for George Floyd and expressed his concern about racism. He spoke about human fraternity that ends in homicide because of the presence of evil. "Prayer is humankind’s refuge against evil in the world," he said. Prayer sows life.

Let this be an opportunity to reflect deeply on how we have reached out and helped heal the many racial wounds in our countries. We have become sensitive and aware of the importance of simple gestures of respect and care for one another. We want to be in solidarity with those who are in the midst of racial conflicts in the classroom, in the neighborhood and on the streets, being challenged to be persons of empathy and compassion to those suffering from prejudices. We have been called to raise our voice in advocacy and to be vigilant in prayer. All of us are responsible to create a world for the common good of all. We ask God for guidance to do this.