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Racial Justice: Finding a Way Forward

June 3, 2020

Dear Presentation Community,

We write to you today knowing our words are not adequate enough to express the thoughts and emotions we all have experienced due to recent events of racism, violence and injustice within our communities and across our nation. We acknowledge that Presentation is not immune to racial biases and transgressions, however we will not tolerate racism or hatred of any kind. We recognize our privilege and are firmly committed to standing in solidarity with communities who are marginalized, especially the Black community, and persevere against racism and any other system of oppression which go against our values rooted in justice, love and mercy.

With the recent killing of George Floyd, we see again how our nation's history of institutional racism continues to damage and destroy lives and families, and defies the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person, which are foundational to a moral society. His tragic and senseless death, as well as those of Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor, fill our hearts with outrage and sadness. We acknowledge that these events cause pain and fear and we know we can and must do better, continue to listen deeply, and take action.

As Presentation People, we are called to embody the life and work of Nano Nagle by our motto: "Not Words, but Deeds."

In the face of fear, she chose to be daring,
In the face of anxiety, she chose to trust,
In the face of impossibility, she chose to begin.
To universal misery she opposed ministry to
persons, To ignorance, knowledge,
To disillusionment, tenacity of purpose,
And to multiple vexations, singleness of heart.
Faced with failure, she held fast to hope,
Faced with death, she believed in a living future,
And programme for that future she gave in one
word, LOVE.

—RAPHAEL CONSEDINE, PBVM

On Monday we gathered as a faculty and staff to pray for the repose of the souls of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and so many more who have been harmed by racism and injustice, and this Friday we will host a vigil and prayer for our community, [RSVP here](#). Other actions include creating a diversity, equity, and inclusion team that will guide policies and strategic planning, as well as a book club for faculty and staff. The book club's first book is ["How To Be An Antiracist" by Ibram X. Kendi](#). This is only where we begin. We know that these actions are not enough and we are committed to continuing this work long-term. To that end, we have developed a web page with resources for our community to better understand systemic racism and how you can help. Visit us here: <https://www.presentationhs.org/about-us/diversity>. We will continue to update this site regularly with news and information.

As an all-girls Catholic high school founded on the principles and values of foundress, Nano Nagle and the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary:

- We believe that all persons have inherent dignity and are made in the image and likeness of God.
- We are committed to an inclusive community which promotes respect, loving dialogue, equity, empathy, humility, courage, understanding, and societal awareness, both locally and globally.
- We believe that diversity is a blessing that refers to the myriad of personal experiences, values, perspectives, talents, and worldviews that arise from differences in culture and circumstance.
- We are committed to creating a diverse learning environment where each student may reflect on their own identity, experiences, talents, and abilities to lead and serve others in a way that is rooted in radical faith, compassion, justice and love.



- All members of the Presentation community are responsible for advancing an understanding of and a respect for diversity as it includes, but is not limited to: ability, age, belief, ethnicity, family structure, gender, gender identity, learning style, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

Today, on behalf of Presentation, we want to acknowledge the sorrow, the fear, and the pain. For all who feel and have felt the weight of discrimination and injustice upon them, we are with you. Know that we are here to listen and learn, improve our programs and systems, and promote advocacy for systemic change. As with all things at Presentation, we seek to work in partnership with our community. Please use [this form](#) to submit reflections and feedback to aid in our planning.

May we unite in this moment with our Presentation Family to recognize the face of God in each other and work together to build a truly authentic and inclusive community that empowers young women. The world is in upheaval, but we stand firm in our commitment to social justice and equality in everything we do.

May God bless each one of you and help us find His path through these challenging times.

In partnership,

Holly Elkins,

President

Katherine Georgiev,

Principal