



ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

PEACE & JUSTICE COMMISSION

Cardinal Rigali Center

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St. Louis, Missouri 63119

**STATEMENT FROM THE PEACE AND JUSTICE COMMISSION IN SUPPORT OF A PEACEFUL AND JUST TRANSFER OF CIVIL
AUTHORITY IN OUR NATION
JANUARY 20, 2021**

The Peace and Justice Commission was founded in 2014 by Archbishop Robert Carlson after the death of Michael Brown as a response to the sins of systemic racism in our community, as we sought to “promote a culture of encounter and of care to construct the common good,” in the words of Pope Francis. Archbishop Mitchell Rozanski has affirmed his commitment to this work. However, wounds like this do not heal quickly, and the attack on the Capitol building on January 6 calls us yet again to this important work.

We believe the first step on our path to a genuine, faithful encounter is to acknowledge the pain suffered by our community and our nation. Therefore, we say—as we have said consistently when addressing violence within our community and our nation—that we must condemn in the strongest possible terms any and all acts of violence and intimidation as incompatible with our Christian faith and with the principles of equality and liberty that animate our democracy. We join with [Archbishop Rozanski](#) and [the USCCB in condemning the attack and warning against future violence](#); an attack not only on the rule of law in the United States, but also on the culture of faithful encounter that the Holy Father calls us to support. The institutions of our democratic republic are the civilian means by which we engage in that culture of encounter, thus it is both our civic and spiritual duty to protect these institutions and denounce violent attacks against them.

We believe that denouncing acts of violence must also be followed by acts of love. Thus, we remind the faithful—as we did four years ago—of our call to love our neighbors, even—and perhaps especially—when we disagree with them. As the nation approaches the inauguration of the next President of the United States, it is our responsibility as Catholics, regardless of our political persuasions, to be examples first and foremost of living the Gospel faithfully and daily. We encourage all faithful people to re-commit themselves to a loving encounter especially with those who have suffered pain or violence, wherever they may be found in public or private life. During this week when we also remember the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we are reminded that, in his words, “People fail to get along because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don’t know each other; they don’t know each other because they have not communicated with each other.” May we reject fear and embrace loving encounter as Dr. King did so fearlessly.

Lastly, we acknowledge that God keeps us steadfast in our work of justice and peace for all. We recognize God sustains us for every good to be accomplished. As people of faith, we also pray for all and lift them up to God. We pray for those who feel disenfranchised and who are disenfranchised. We pray for those law enforcement officers who suffered violence and death last week and for all law enforcement officers, who seek to secure the blessings of our liberty for our nation through their work every day. We pray for public officials who have had to endure greater threats of violence during these uncertain times, and who need prayers for discernment of the Will of God as they conduct their business. We pray for our children to be blessed with peace and understanding as they struggle to comprehend all they are seeing in our nation. Finally, we pray that Christians become more deeply converted to the Will of God in their lives, and that all persons of goodwill become more committed to peace: peace in our homes, peace in our family, peace in our community, peace in our nation, and peace in our world.

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