



ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS
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Archdiocese of St. Louis Statement on the Statue of St. Louis, the King

ST. LOUIS – The history of the statue of St. Louis, the King is one founded in piety and reverence before God, and for non-believers, respect for one’s neighbor. The reforms that St. Louis implemented in French government focused on impartial justice, protecting the rights of his subjects, steep penalties for royal officials abusing power, and a series of initiatives to help the poor.

King Louis IX’s renowned work in charity helped elevate him to Sainthood. His daily suppers were shared with numerous beggars, whom he invited to the royal table. On many evenings, he would not let them leave before he washed their feet. He personally paid to feed more than 100 poor Parisians every day. His care for the sick was equally moving; St. Louis frequently ministered to lepers. He also created a number of hospitals, including one for the blind and another for ex-prostitutes.

For Catholics, St. Louis is an example of an imperfect man who strived to live a life modeled after the life of Jesus Christ. For St. Louisans, he is a model for how we should care for our fellow citizen, and a namesake with whom we should be proud to identify. The sword on his statue is not raised for warfare, but rather is held with the blade down—a symbol of peace. In his [recent statement](#) on Racism, Justice and Peace, Archbishop Carlson said, in part:

“...Scripture tells us to turn our swords into plow shares. Let us turn our guns into metal. May that metal someday be the statue in our community that stands as a reminder that here, in the Greater St. Louis Region, we chose justice so that there would be peace...”

**- Most Reverend Robert J. Carlson
Apostolic Administrator for the Archdiocese of St. Louis**

Peace is what St. Louisans hoped for in the new twentieth century when they erected the statue of St. Louis the King—and peace is what St. Louisans still strive toward in this century.

The Archdiocese of St. Louis is encouraged by the winds of change that are at hand, but believes that this energy of change should be focused on programs and policies that will dismantle racism and create a more equal society for all races and religions. As Catholics, we believe that each person—no matter their race, religion, background or belief—is created in the image and likeness of God. As such, all should be treated with love, respect and dignity. We should not seek to erase history, but recognize and learn from it, while working to create new opportunities for our brothers and sisters.