29 May 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Over the past two months, I have witnessed with sorrow the effect the current pandemic has had particularly on the black community here in the Archdiocese of Detroit. It has been painful to hear daily of how the virus is impacting pastors, parish staff, and friends and family of the faithful here, and of the ensuing fear and anxiety that has followed in its wake since. And now, compounding this suffering is – as one of the faithful put it to me – that "deep, familiar, and soul-crushing ache" which the death of George Floyd has reawakened. I know that while physically distant, the events in Minneapolis have cut deep into existing wounds held close to your own hearts.

With this in mind, I wanted to offer a brief but sincere re-assurance and expression of solidarity in our Catholic community. St. Paul preached: God has put this body together, so that "there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same concern for one another. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy" (1 Cor. 12:25-26). Admittedly, this solidarity has not always been perfect – as I shared two summers ago in my pastoral note on racism, we are living the wounds of many years of injustice in our local communities. But like all things in the Christian life, when we turn to Him, all can be made perfect in Christ. So, I want to acknowledge your suffering, to bring it into the light, so that we all together as a Catholic Church community can bring these wounds we share in Christ, to Christ for healing.

I hope, too, that you will join me in praying for two additional petitions at this time. First and foremost is for a blessed repose for George Floyd, and for comfort for his grieving family and friends. Second is for peace, both in our communities and in our own hearts.

Entrusting you to the intercession of Blessed Solanus Casey, I am

 Sincerely yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend Allen H. Vigneron Archbishop of Detroit