



**Statement by the Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair  
Regarding the Killing of George Floyd**

*June 1, 2020*

The tragic killing of George Floyd has inflicted yet another deep wound not only on his family and local community but on our entire nation. I pray for the repose of his soul and for those scarred by his death. What happened was senseless and brutal and only underscores once again the crying need for racial justice, equality, and the acceptance of every person as possessing equal rights and dignity under God, and under the law.

The United States Bishops have reflected long and hard over many years on the reality of racism in America, most recently in *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love, a Pastoral Letter Against Racism*. More than just a letter, it gave rise to many listening sessions in cities around the country, including one attended by members of the Archdiocese of Hartford. The goal was to provide critical insight into how we might better respond to the realities of racism in our country.

This coming Saturday, June 6, our Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Social Justice Ministry begins its yearlong online conference entitled “Rooted In Faith, Opening Wide Our Hearts.” The goal is to provide perspectives for addressing the sin of racism and the urgent need for our nation to address it.

The reform of society and its institutions has to begin with individuals who are motivated to do what is right and who are prepared to work with others in a common cause for what is right and just. As the bishops point out, if we say we believe in God, that we love God, then we need to obey God by loving our neighbor, whatever his or her race, ethnicity or religion. And we cannot be silent or inactive when the dignity and rights of others are threatened.

In what may sometimes seem like an unending uphill battle, we can take inspiration from these powerful words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: “*I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant.*”

Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair  
Archbishop of Hartford