



NORTH AMERICA

STATEMENT OF U.S. FOCOLARE MOVEMENT: OUR COMMITMENT TO RACIAL JUSTICE

As we witness the recent events that highlight once again the odious reality of racial injustice and violence, we are broken-hearted.

The dream of our founder, Chiara Lubich, to see steps ahead in the realization of the prayer of Jesus to the Father, "that all may be one," (John 17:21) seems far - almost out of reach. We also realize that what we see now is just the tip of an iceberg of problems that are so big and so complex that it seems impossible to imagine how our actions might have an impact for positive change. We feel powerless and outraged.

And yet we still hope. We dig deep, to reach for Christian hope, which is not a vague or vapid desire for a beautiful future, but a prayer to be attentive to the transforming action of God in our present time, and in history.

We remain deeply touched by the firm and clear invitation of the United States Catholic Bishops on this issue ([Statement of US Bishop Chairmen in Wake of Death of George Floyd and National Protests](#)).

"As members of the Church, we must stand for the more difficult right and just actions instead of the easy wrongs of indifference. We cannot turn a blind eye to these atrocities and yet still try to profess to respect every human life. We serve a God of love, mercy, and justice."

"Too many communities around this country feel their voices are not being heard, their complaints about racist treatment are unheeded, and we are not doing enough to point out that this deadly treatment is antithetical to the Gospel of Life ... 'As bishops, we unequivocally state that racism is a life issue.'"

As we let these words penetrate our hearts, our minds, and our lives, we also ask: what can I do? What can we do? We realize how much we need to ask for the gift of a discerning spirit at this moment, for ourselves individually, and as communities.

We start with a sincere examination of conscience: what needs to change *in me*? What is the conversion to which I am called? Many of us realize that we need to greatly intensify our effort

to express in a more public way how we stand with those who suffer and against racism of all types lest our silence becomes complicity in this great evil of our times.

And with this, we also recommit ourselves to reaching out to all those who are suffering deeply right now, to express our desire to be close, and to make space and time to listen deeply, and in some way take on their pain.

We also hope to draw encouraging strength from efforts to build local communities that are truly based on the wide embrace of the Gospel: because we have one Father in heaven, we are all brothers and sisters. We aim to foster a deep spirit of open welcome and vibrant participation in our culturally diverse and multi-generational communities. We take as our guide the words of Chiara Lubich: "Be a family."

We realize that in the face of such deep tensions and difficulties, our concrete projects and initiatives, such as the Economy of Communion ([Economy of Communion](#)), are small, a drop in the bucket. At the same time, we continue to believe that they contain seeds of powerful ideas that can help us to respond to the deepest needs in our world.

We realize that only God can work the miracle of the deep conversion of hearts, minds, and habits that will make us capable of the love that reveals our true identity as brothers and sisters to one another, as one human family. In a deep spirit of prayer, we entrust our work to God as the protagonist, dedicating our efforts especially to the youngest in our communities who may feel particular fear and apprehension for their future.

The journey ahead may be arduous. Some of our conversations may be difficult and at times even feel divisive. But we feel this is precisely where the depths of our love call us to travel - into these deep wounds - so that they can be exposed to the healing light and presence of God's love in us and among us.