

**From:** [Pat McGuire](#)  
**To:** [ALL-TRINITY](#)  
**Subject:** Racism, Rage, Response for our City and Nation  
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Dear students and colleagues,

Last night, sleep was hard to come by with the images of so much anger and outrage filling every screen. We keep watching the same horror movie over and over again. What can we do to make the social nightmare of racism and its consequences end? Yes, a rhetorical question, but still urgent and necessary to ask ourselves each day.

The angry protests on the streets of D.C. --- were some of you there? Please send me stories and photos if you are willing to share them --- these protests like those across the nation, are a clear and understandable response to the brutal murder of George Floyd under the knee of a police officer in Minneapolis. It's hard to watch that video, and equally hard to turn away. Mr. Floyd's name now is enrolled in the terrible and tragic litany of other Black victims of police violence --- Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, Freddie Gray, too many others to list here. The inability of this nation to come to terms with the racism that has coursed through its bones across the centuries means that we keep reliving these tragedies in each generation. Perhaps those of us who remember the 1960's grew complacent over the years; perhaps we have allowed all racial outrages to be reduced to a few minutes of screen time before we move on to the next new thing.

Now we see the bitter consequences of inaction and deceiving ourselves into thinking that we had reached some kind of "post-racial" society. Remember that? 2008 is more than a decade ago, and we only deluded ourselves. Today we have national leadership that seems incapable of any expression of empathy, that uses rhetoric that encourages white supremacy and authoritarian law enforcement. The coronavirus pandemic has exposed the hideous consequences of racial inequity and poverty in this country, and yet, our leadership has said nothing about that, and instead, ignores the death toll while counting the money lost at golf courses. Photo after photo of our

national leadership and judicial appointments reveals an abysmal lack of representation of people of color; excluding Black and Brown people from government positions of influence ensures the creation and enforcement of policies that work against more diverse, more just and peaceful communities. At the same time, we are in a terrible struggle for justice for immigrants at all levels, and we are particularly worried for our undocumented brothers and sisters right now as the Supreme Court DACA decision looms --- another consequence of an administration that pursues the politics of racial and ethnic injustice each day.

Trinity's entire mission is grounded in the Catholic faith teachings of social justice, teachings shared across many different faiths. Social Justice demands that we uphold the dignity and worth of every human life; that we stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in need; that we exercise our responsibilities as citizens and people of this earth to call out the injustice and oppression that afflicts too many, stunting the potential of many and snuffing out entirely too many lives. Racism, white supremacy, bigotry, prejudice --- by whatever name we label them, these are grave moral sins not just bad social behaviors, and we must redouble, indeed, triple and quadruple our efforts to confront and root them out of our communities.

All of us in the Trinity community have been captive in a strange landscape these last few months, unable to be present physically to each other, hanging out on Google or zoom which is not really a good substitute for being present, enjoying the company of families at home while longing for the days when we can venture out again to have something resembling a more "normal" life. Tomorrow, I'm going to be sharing with you the draft of our plan for "reopening" later in the summer and fall, and I will invite your feedback on our plans.

But the more I think about it, "reopening" is just not enough. We cannot simply "go back" to some time before all was interrupted, rewind the movie and start over again. The rage and violence of this era, spawned by police brutality but fed by deeper wells of pain and suffering and oppression and hatred, demand more intelligent and courageous responses than what we

thought we were doing in that time before the pandemic changed everything.

Trinity will not merely “reopen,” we will have a true renaissance of spirit and purpose. It will take time, none of what we are planning will occur all at once. You’ll see the details and timetable in the plan tomorrow.

But what’s most important is that we think together about a renaissance of spirit and purpose, that we consider our roles and responsibilities in the larger social context. Our educational plans cannot be simply about keeping ourselves safe if the world is burning down around us. We must continue to advance Trinity’s mission by whatever means are possible, and we cannot allow the pandemic crisis to throw us off course, to force us to relent in our commitment to make a real difference for justice and peace in this world. Our methods may be different --- tech tools for teaching and learning are with us forever, they are not going away ---- but our purpose must be clear, resilient and insistent.

We must and will do every more in our teaching and learning activities at Trinity to address the racism and hatred that afflict our nation, that present barriers for too many of our students and families, that debilitate even the best of intentions to succeed. I want every person here at Trinity to know that our lessons in solidarity start with the ways in which we stand together here to support each other in times of need. We don’t always get it right, but we need to keep learning how to make progress.

To everyone who is suffering in the Trinity family: we are here for you, please let us know if there are ways we can help.

To all those who see the suffering around us: what can we do to create real change?

To our great Trinity family: please know of my care and concern for you; for those on the “front lines” of healthcare or family care or advocacy or teaching, know of our pride in your work and hope for your safety. For those who decide to join in protests and marches and physical expressions of advocacy against

racism and police violence, good for you, please be careful, and know that we are here for you.

More to come, please stay safe,

President Pat McGuire