

BISHOPS' CONFERENCE STATEMENT ON RACIAL JUSTICE

I am sure you have all been appalled by the killing of George Floyd and the violence that has followed this terrible event, both in our own country and throughout the world. The Black Lives Matter protests within England and Wales highlighted important issues within our own region. The Bishops' Conference has issued a statement on this, which I would like to share with you. Within our own ministry, we should always endeavour to express the Church's rejection of racism, as clean contrary to the values of the Gospel. I would encourage you to share this statement in your Parish Newsletter:

We stand in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in the USA as they challenge the evil of racism and the brutal killing of George Floyd. As the US Bishops made clear: '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.'

Systemic racism is embedded in our own society. The disproportionate harm suffered by BAME people throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted profound inequalities, marginalisation and injustice here in the UK. The peaceful Black Lives Matter protests taking place in our towns and cities this week reflect the understandable anger that so many people feel about this.

As Catholics we recognise that racism is an evil which must be opposed; we all have a responsibility for actively promoting racial justice. Whenever we ignore racism or dismiss BAME people's experience of it, we are complicit in violations of human dignity. We pray for God's help to overcome racism in all its forms and that we might protect everyone who suffers its consequences. We are all made in God's image.

Bishop Declan Lang

Bishop Paul McAleenan

Lead Bishop for International Affairs

Lead Bishop for Racial Justice

With every good wish and blessing,



✠ Robert Byrne, C.O.
Bishop of Hexham & Newcastle