



CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Statement on Racial Injustice and State Violence

Catholic Theological Society of America Board of Directors

June 3, 2020

On behalf of the Catholic Theological Society of America, we its leaders express our anger, grief and dismay over the recent killings of Ahmaud Arbery in Brunswick, Breonna Taylor in Louisville, George Floyd in Minneapolis and the many more black women and men victimized by the police and other aggressors. We stand in solidarity with all victims of racialized violence and the communities who must endure the terror and fear it causes.

As Catholics, we are called to scrutinize “the signs of the times.” As scholars in service to the Church, we seek to understand the current moment through our work of research, education, and advocacy. The social upheavals erupting across the country are in response to the structural violence embedded in criminal justice, economics, health, and political systems. These injustices disproportionately affect Black communities and other racially disadvantaged social groups. We recognize that racialized violence is a key factor present in many of the crises we face in our nation, including: the detention and separation of families; the COVID-19 pandemic that is disproportionately affecting those from Native American, Black, and Latinx communities and is unjustifiably inflaming bias targeting Asian communities; staggering unemployment; and ecological irresponsibility.

As Catholic scholars, we also have a special responsibility to acknowledge that our church has a tragic history of complicity in the nation’s endemic racism and an inability to recognize that complicity. Too often, it has failed to respond adequately to the plight of communities demanding racial justice. With sorrow, we acknowledge the CTSA itself has frequently been complicit with racial inequality.

As the world’s largest professional association of Catholic scholars, we commit ourselves to:

- A deeper engagement in our scholarship and teaching with the theological contributions coming from communities directly impacted by racialized violence, especially from Black, Womanist, Feminist, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian thinkers.
- A respectful listening to the insights from advocates for racial justice from afflicted communities who have been too often ignored and underappreciated in formal theological scholarship.

- A commitment to mentoring the voices of future theological leaders from disadvantaged and underrepresented communities, so that the face of Catholic theological engagement better reflects the present diversity of the faith community.

Finally, we also call upon our members to consider advocacy for racial justice and systemic change as a component of the service they render to the church and the academy at this critical hour.

Signed,

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