



BLACK CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL SYMPOSIUM

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“Statement regarding Mr. Trump’s racist comments about Haiti and African countries”

“Whoever mocks the poor reviles their Maker; whoever rejoices at their misfortune will not go unpunished.” – Proverbs 17:5

On this day when the nation commemorates Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King’s transformative mission of justice and equality, we the members of the Black Catholic Theological Symposium, a national interdisciplinary theological society of the Roman Catholic tradition are compelled to speak out against the racist comments made toward the country of Haiti and the countries comprising the continent of Africa. Dr. King once said, “History will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the strident clamor of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people.” Thus, given the most recent reprehensible and repugnant rhetoric of the President of the United States, we cannot remain silent. The offensive, insulting, and disgusting words attributed to Mr. Trump who is said to have referred to immigrants from Haiti and African countries, and the countries themselves in a profane, vulgar, and derogative manner appall us. He also allegedly said that the United States should consider more immigrants from Norway further demonstrating his racist predilections. According to media accounts, the President made the remarks during a White House discussion with lawmakers on immigration.

We subscribe to the words of James Baldwin, “Ignorance allied with power is the most ferocious enemy justice can have.” Mr. Trump’s comments are woefully racist, ignorant, xenophobic, and inflammatory. Racism is undeniably evil. The evil of racism is always incapable of critiquing itself; therefore, it must be condemned whenever and wherever it arises. Racism is a question of power and not merely attitude. The President harbors these racist views and has the power to implement policy that subjugates poor people and people of color to oppressive systems and structures. His haphazard pronouncements and unmitigated power is problematic for the nation and world. Mr. Trump has repeatedly demonstrated himself unknowledgeable about the history of this country and the contributions of the children of the African Diaspora brutally enslaved and brought to these shores as well as those who have immigrated here, particularly Haitians whose benefaction is woven into the very fiber of our nation.

We vehemently condemn the racist comments of Mr. Trump. We cannot remain silent amid the horrid neglect and lack of concern for our sisters and brothers maligned throughout the world. Globally millions of immigrants are fleeing despicable and life-threatening situations. We have a moral and Christian responsibility to be supportive as they escape political, cultural, and social threats in their native homelands. Mr. Trump’s maleficence toward our sisters and brothers in Haiti and African nations is antithetical to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and is contradictory to the universal, unconditional love of God for all people.

Thus, we urge our Roman Catholic Church leaders in the United States and all people of faith, and the political leadership of this nation to not remain silent but to voice your outrage against Mr. Trump’s demeaning and incessant racism.

“It’s not the violence of the few that scares me, it’s the silence of the many.” - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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