



# DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

*Office of the Bishop*

August 2017

Dear Friends in Christ,

*Racism is an evil which endures in our society and in our Church.* Almost 40 years ago, the Bishops of the United States wrote a pastoral letter on racism entitled “Brothers and Sisters to Us” and this was the opening line. Unfortunately, this statement still rings true today. The Church has a tremendous responsibility to encourage dialogue and heal tensions associated with the racism in our communities, our nation, and our world.

The recent events which occurred in Charlottesville, Virginia reminded us that while many of us may not experience or be aware of racism every day, it exists in many hidden ways. Too often many of our fellow brothers and sisters experience the effects of it daily. These events remind us that racism is real.

It is a sin, deterring us from the call to live as children of God. When racism permeates our thoughts, it shows forth in our words and actions, revealing prejudices that prevent us from viewing each individual we encounter as a child of God created equally.

I urge you to reflect on how this sin has potentially impacted your own life and ask the Lord for the courage and grace to resist this evil. Please pray for your community and our nation that we may come together as one seeking a solution to this wound that yet divides us.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak  
Bishop of Grand Rapids