

A Call for Racial Reconciliation from the Missouri Catholic Conference

We, the Catholic bishops of Missouri, offer our support to those individuals and organizations currently promoting racial reconciliation and healing by publicly acknowledging the lynching of African Americans that occurred in Missouri in the past. These evil acts of violence must be recognized and addressed in order for efforts to combat racism in our society and culture to bear fruit.

As we stated with our brother bishops in our recently released [Pastoral Letter against Racism](#), we have seen bold expressions of racism in recent times and recognize, that “racism still infects our nation.”¹ It must be candidly addressed to be eradicated. Indeed, “[t]he evil of racism festers in part, because, as a nation, there has been very limited formal acknowledgement of the harm done to so many, no moment of atonement, no national process of reconciliation and, all too often a neglect of our history.”²

By publicly recognizing that lynching occurred here, and permanently marking these horrific acts as events of historical significance, we can begin the process of acknowledgment and atonement that is necessary for us to move forward as a people dedicated to the idea that all men are created equally in the image and likeness of God.

The work of eradicating racism in Missouri will not be easy, and it will take time. We call upon the Catholic faithful and upon all men and women of good will to join this great effort by seeking a conversion of heart, removing any and all remaining vestiges of racial bitterness or hatred within each of us by working to do justice, love goodness, and to walk humbly with God.³ May God help us in this important work.

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Approved November 30, 2018

¹ *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love - A Pastoral Letter Against Racism*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, November 2018, p. 3.

² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 7, quoting Micah 6:8.