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CNS documentary service

The Catholic Church and the Black Lives Matter Movement

Bishop Braxton

In a pastoral letter on the Catholic Church and the Black Lives Matter movement, Bishop Edward K. Braxton of Belleville, Illinois, says that "in spite of the profound differences and seeming incompatibility between the teachings of the church and the Black Lives Matter movement, there may be ways in which the church and the movement might benefit from a conversation" about race, policing issues and life issues. The movement has grown from the protests in recent years over the killings of unarmed blacks by police officers. As Bishop Braxton points out, some see the

"We must 'pray, listen, learn, think and act' in such a way that all people everywhere will know that we truly believe that black lives matter precisely because all lives matter!"

movement as a successor to the civil rights movement, while others "have condemned this movement as a violent ideology urging attacks on police officers." The bishop says his goal for the pastoral is not to answer all questions about the relationship between the church and the Black Lives Matter movement but to share "some themes that might foster a conversation which might otherwise not take place." Themes he shares include the Catholic Church's history in the African-American community, the Black Lives Matter movement's support of abortion, black-on-black crime, gun control and the future of black lives in America. The pastoral is dated Feb. 26, the fourth anniversary of the death of unarmed black teenager Trayvon Martin, who was shot by a neighborhood watch volunteer. The pastoral follows.

dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ: May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, fill your hearts throughout the remainder of Lent and in the coming Easter Season! As the Catholic Church celebrates the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ during this jubilee Year of Mercy proclaimed by His Holiness Pope Francis, I am pleased to share with you this pastoral letter, "The Catholic Church and the Black Lives Matter Movement: The Racial Divide in the United States Revisited."

This pastoral letter has a moving viewpoint in eight parts.

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