

origins

CNS documentary service

Ongoing Reactions to Killing of George Floyd by Police

Catholic Leaders

As daily protests over the killing of George Floyd entered a third week, Catholic leaders continued to address the crisis in America. Floyd, an unarmed African American, was killed May 25 in Minneapolis by a white police officer who held his knee on Floyd's neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds. The officer was arrested May 29, and on June 3, charges against him were upgraded to second-degree murder. Three other police officers were charged with aiding and abetting murder; all were fired May 26. Starting in Minneapolis May 26 and spreading throughout the nation and the world, protests against police brutality and killings of black people grew, as

“The demonstrations and protests of these days ... call us to uphold and defend the truth that Black Lives Matter.”

almost every major city in America saw large daily protests. In the first days of protests, after nightfall some protests turned violent and looting took place in many areas. There was widespread anger as Floyd's killing came on the heels of other killings of unarmed African Americans by police and the lack of police reform as these killings happened again and again throughout the country over many years. The coronavirus pandemic that hit communities of color harder than white communities also spotlighted inequalities in American life. Catholic leaders responded to all these events with statements, homilies and tweets. A sampling of these follow (see *Origins*, Vol. 50, No. 7, for more reactions to Floyd's killing).

Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley, OFM Cap, Boston

for 401 years this land, which would become the United States of America, has had to deal with the evil and moral cancer that is racism.

When the word *racism* is invoked it is often identified in personal terms: someone whose attitudes, convictions and actions target a group of other individuals because of color. This is a valid but only partial meaning of the term. From such people as Frederick Douglas and Harriet Tubman to contemporary leaders, thinkers and activists, African Americans have tried consistently to expand the general understanding of racism. In word and deed, they have pointed to the reality of systemic and structural racism.

continued on page 122



contents

- 121 Ongoing Reactions to Killing of George Floyd by Police
by Catholic Leaders
- 132 Homily at Mass Marking 100th Anniversary of Birth of St. John Paul II
By Pope Francis
- 133 Letter for 100th Anniversary of Birth of St. John Paul II
by Retired Pope Benedict XVI
- 135 Letter for 25th Anniversary of *Ut Unum Sint*
by Pope Francis
- 136 Datebook
- 136 On File

June 18, 2020
Volume 50
Number 8