



ASSEMBLY OF CANONICAL
ORTHODOX BISHOPS
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**Assembly of Bishops' Executive Committee Calls All to Prayer for Justice and Peace
during Nationwide Civil Unrest**

June 1, 2020

We, the members of the Executive Committee of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the U.S.A., express our strong concern and deep sorrow for the recent unrest throughout our beloved country.

We stand in unequivocal solidarity and peaceful protest with all those who condemn racism and inequality, which betray the spirit of democracy in our nation, *i.e.* “*one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all*”. The unjust and unjustifiable murder of Mr. George Floyd, as well as so many before him, is deplorable as anti-Christian and immoral.

At the same time, we denounce *all* expressions of violence and revenge, including those despoiling and detracting from peaceful demonstrations. Peaceful marches of protest are a distinctive hallmark of American freedom and progress. “Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all ... so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all” (Romans 12:17-18).

Violence is a horrible and tangible manifestation of the reign of sin in our world. It is expressed in many faces, all of which seek to deny the image and likeness of God in each human person, in whom God has placed an irreducible dignity and sacredness.

Thus, as Orthodox Hierarchs, we condemn all actions and words that promote hatred and racism, but also all acts of violence and destruction.

Moreover, in a gesture of collective appeal, on Wednesday, June 3, 2020 at 12:00 PM EDT, we invite all clergy, faithful, and people of good will – of all traditions, faiths, and walks of life – to participate in a moment of silence and solidarity for all victims of racial violence followed by prayer for peace and reconciliation in this country.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23). Therefore, as we kneel, invoking the coming of the Holy Spirit as the Comforter, let us offer up our prayers to our loving God for the victims of hatred and racism, to safeguard us all from such prejudice, and also vengeance and destruction, as well as preserve unity and peace in our country, our common home.