

SACRED HEART OF JESUS CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Feast of St. Justin Martyr

Made in the image and likeness of God, the human person possesses an essential dignity which is greater even than that of the angels. Every human person must live a life that is in accord with the dignity given to us by our Creator. Frederick Douglass, former slave and abolitionist, expressed great frustration that the Christian religion was practiced by slaveholders in such a way that it ignored the essential dignity of God found in the unjustly enslaved person, and many people today also feel frustration that after so many years of social and racial progress, there can still be such tragic lack of respect for the essential human dignity of the human person, as exemplified by the scandalous case of George Floyd.

There are two Psalms that I feel express in prayer a right feeling for this moment of difficulty in our nation. Psalm 8 gives us the beautiful picture of the dignity God has bestowed on the human person. The Psalmist tells us that the human person has been made "little less than a god," and has been "crowned with glory and honor." Every Christian person must recognize this and live according to it – that God has crowned EVERY one of His children with glory and honor. It is not for us to take off that crown and cast it down. God placed it, and He is the only one who can remove it. With Christ's own tenderness, we need to approach every human person with the respect that is due to them.

Psalm 11 speaks to us of the confidence we should have in the presence of God, and it tells us that "God tests both the good and the bad, He hates those who love violence..." When we lose sight of the dignity of the other person, we are more prone to do violence against him/her. The Psalm goes on to tell us that the nature of the Lord "is just and He loves just deeds, the upright shall see his face." God's justice is inescapable, but it is the human person who loses patience with God's timing. As humans, we experience frustration and anger when we encounter injustice, but through recognizing the dignity of the other person, also made in the image and likeness of God, we can come to the table together to do the work of building peace and understanding.

This is also the message of the Eucharist. When we look upon God made present in the mystery of the Sacrament, we see what we should become, leaving behind the world, the flesh, and the devil for a better life, one lived in imitation of Christ.

I feel strongly that this is a moment for each of us to turn to God in authentic, humble prayer, but also to embrace action for the Kingdom of God, following the

teachings of our Holy Catholic Faith to bring more compassion, understanding, and above all, more sensitivity to the dignity of EVERY human person we encounter, as we seek Christ in our brothers and sisters.

In His Most Sacred Heart,
Fr. John