



4915 S. Howell Avenue  
Suite 501  
Milwaukee, WI 53207-5939  
Telephone: 414.483.4898  
Fax: 414.483.6712

[www.nacc.org](http://www.nacc.org)

### **A Message From our NACC Board Chair, Jim Letourneau**

Dear NACC members:

Like many of you, I have watched the news in horror, disgust, shame, and disbelief. The sin of racism continues to poison our culture, robbing racial minorities of opportunities and their very lives. As a Caucasian, I cannot pretend to know first-hand the experience of racism, but I find myself praying the words of the psalmist, “How long, Lord?” (Psalm 13:2).

I am encouraged by the protestors around the globe demonstrating against the status quo. George Floyd’s murder has ignited a fire for justice amidst generations of embers. The protestors’ cries in pain and anger are today’s prophetic voices.

Our Catholic social teachings challenge us to uphold and defend the sanctity of all human life, particularly those who are most vulnerable. We cannot call ourselves “pro-life” until we advocate for *all* life and ensure that all peoples have the ability to achieve their potential thereby attaining the Common Good.

The USCCB’s pastoral letter against racism, “Open Wide Our Hearts,” reminds us that, “Racism can only end if we contend with the policies and institutional barriers that perpetuate and preserve the inequality – economic and social – that we still see all around us.”

The temptation for me is to look at the sin “out there”: in Minneapolis, in Los Angeles, in New York City, etc. In my judgement I ask myself, “*How could law enforcement be so antagonistic?*”

But I must also be self-reflective and ask myself how I perpetuate “white privilege” through my decisions ... and lack thereof. Social change cannot occur without conversion of heart, individually and collectively. I am convinced we must discern these questions with a great deal of humility and honesty. As a leader within NACC, I bear particular responsibility for asking how our association contributes to this evil, including in subtle and unconscious ways. I must ask myself, “How is NACC going to be different as a result of this moment in history?”

I ask for your prayerful support as I shepherd these questions with our leadership. My commitment to all of you is to bring these questions to our Board for action. Look for communication of those decisions in an upcoming statement. I don’t know the specific timing of that communication, but it will be before the end of this calendar year.

Dr. Martin Luther King wrote, “Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church’s often vocal sanction of things as they are.” (Letter from the Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963) Yes, we are a community of faith who minister to people in pain and suffering. We extend the healing ministry of Jesus in the name of the Church. NACC’s Vision also tells us we “(promote) the dignity of persons of every age, culture, and state in life.” I invite all of us – individually and communally - to enter our Vision more faithfully by joining together to end the sin of racism.

Humbly,

Jim Letourneau  
NACC Board Chair