



An International Network for Peace, Justice and Life

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MISSION STATEMENT: We are committed to the protection of life, which is threatened in today's world by war, abortion, poverty, racism, the death penalty, and euthanasia. We believe that these issues are linked under a 'consistent ethic of life'. We challenge those working on all or some of these issues to maintain a cooperative spirit of peace, reconciliation, and respect in protecting the unprotected.

Consistent Life Network Statement on the Death of George Floyd and the Ensuing Violence

On Monday, May 25, George Floyd, an African-American man from Minneapolis, was killed by a white police officer, Derek Chauvin, kneeling on his neck for nearly nine minutes while Mr. Floyd pleaded for his life. Three other officers were there and did nothing to help Floyd. A video of the incident went viral on social media, prompting outrage. Demonstrations started in Minneapolis and spread to a number of other cities across the US. They grew in size and violence, with outbreaks of looting and arson. The police responded forcefully, and there have been many instances of police brutality and targeting of peaceful demonstrators.

The Consistent Life Network wants to add its voice to the many organizations, elected officials and private citizens condemning the murder of George Floyd as another episode of racist violence by the police. It comes two months after the death of Breonna Taylor in Kentucky and is one more name in a list stretching back years—Michael Brown, Philando Castile, John Crawford III, Eric Garner, LaQuan McDonald, Tamir Rice, Walter Scott—of unarmed black women and men killed by the police.

As an organization dedicated to nonviolent solutions, we stand with peaceful protests against racist violence, and note that most protesters generally appear to have behaved nonviolently. We share the concern expressed by a number of peaceful protesters that the smaller numbers committing violence and vandalism distract the public and responsible officials from the purpose of the protests and result in peaceful protesters suffering from the actions of authorities responding to such acts. We refuse to let concerns about rioting, violence, and vandalism distract us from the central problem that provoked people into taking to the streets in protest: the continuing role of racism in the United States and the lethal consequences this has for people of color.

The life and dignity of each person must be defended, especially for those on the margins whose lives are not valued. Because of the pervasive structural racism in the US, this includes too many people of color. This must change.

The Consistent Life Network is dedicated to moving beyond violence. We call for a response to this tragic murder that promotes both peace and justice. In the short term:

- We encourage demonstrations to proceed peacefully, and we call upon the police to refocus their tactics on de-escalation rather than confrontation and to work with local organizations to allow people's voices to be heard.
- We call on local officials to ensure that investigations are quick and transparent.

In the long run:

- We call upon the police departments and individual police officers to work against the militarization and racism which is far too common in many departments. It is sometimes said that these killings are the work of a "few bad apples." We want those involved to remember the rest of this saying: "A few bad apples spoils the whole barrel."
- We call upon the Federal government to work with state and local authorities to investigate both individual acts of racist violence, and to work to root out structures and institutional cultures that promote or tolerate racist violence.