

Paulist Fathers Statement on the Events in Charlottesville, VA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“Because I am an American, I am a better Catholic. Because I am a Catholic, I am a better American.”

These words of our founder, Servant of God Isaac Hecker, are the religious heritage of the Paulist Fathers. It is a heritage that we call upon in the wake of the tragic events at Charlottesville, VA, and the confusion resulting from statements of our President.

These events and statements have caused great dismay to many Americans as well as to those around the world who look to the United States as a beacon of freedom and equality. They have served to embolden leaders of white supremacist, neo-Nazi and anti-Semitic movements to promote further their very evil causes.

Americans fought the Civil War against the philosophies that spawned the events in Charlottesville. Since then, our nation has engaged in a civil rights struggle for some 100 years to guarantee the rights of all American women and men. American women and men of every background fought in World War II to defeat the Nazi regime, fascism, theories of racial superiority and anti-Semitism.

The sacrifice of generations of American heroes proclaims that you cannot be an American and espouse fascism, you cannot be an American and espouse white supremacism, and you cannot be an American and espouse anti-Semitism.

The life and teachings of Jesus Christ, and the accumulated experience of generations of his followers, proclaim that you cannot be Christian and fascist, you cannot be a Christian and racial supremacist, and you cannot be a Christian and be anti-Semitic.

We pray for our country, that all of its citizens may seek an end to any form of hate and violence. May the Holy Spirit guide our thoughts, words and actions, making us instruments **of God’s love, enabling an ethic of non-violence and peace to prevail in our nation’s civic discourse.**

We pray also for our President and all elected officials, that the same Spirit may instill in them prudence and right judgment.

As our country’s children return to school, many will begin each day reciting these words: “I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” We challenge every citizen, and all of our elected leaders, to speak and act in accord with these hallowed words!

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