

Statement on President Trump's Comments about Haiti, El Salvador, and African Countries

**Marianist Social Justice Collaborative (MSJC) Steering Committee
January 17, 2018**

The MSJC Steering Committee is deeply troubled by the reports of vulgar, demeaning remarks reportedly made by President Trump about Haiti, El Salvador, and African countries. His comments about these nations, comprised primarily of people of color, are particularly disturbing coming from the leader of a nation that was built and strengthened by the immigration of diverse peoples of every race and religion. We strongly condemn the use of such inflammatory and denigrating language by President Trump, which only serves to deepen the divides between citizens of our country and leaders of nations. Whether the actual words that the president used were the ones reported or not, it's clear that whatever he said was offensive and demeaning.

Our Marianist founders, responding to the suffering of the poor in their local communities during the troubled times of the French Revolution, founded small faith communities where all were welcomed and regarded as equals. Today, Marianists still firmly believe in the equality of all men and women of every race, religion, and nationality, all created in the image and likeness of God. Certain of the inherent human dignity of all people, we actively reach out in welcome to all, standing in solidarity with any who are the targets of racism, discrimination, or hate. Moreover, many in our Marianist family serve, minister with, and learn from countless faith-filled, talented, and inspirational Africans, Haitians, and Salvadorans. We take offense to the negative generalizations and false stereotypes that have been imposed on our Haitian, Salvadoran, and African sisters and brothers.

As Christians, we cannot remain silent in the face of injustice and racism, and we are called by our baptism to be prophetic voices and advocates for the poor and oppressed. Pope Francis reminds us, "We must overcome individualism, selfishness, all forms of racism, intolerance and manipulation of people. Let nobody turn their back on society and feel excluded. No to segregation! No to racism!" But while we are compelled to speak out in response to injustice, we are also called by our baptism to promote unity and reconciliation. America is sharply divided, and these divisions threaten to tear at the very fabric of community life. Believing in the inherent goodness of all people, the MSJC Steering Committee urges all members of the Marianist family to act as catalysts within their communities, promoting civil discourse and respectful dialogue between people of good will who hold differing opinions.

While good people may differ in the solutions they see to the problems facing our nation, let all within the Marianist family remain united in our commitment to strengthen our communities, to advocate on behalf of the poor and the oppressed, to regard every person from every nation as our equal, and to pledge to promote the common good.

Since 2002, MSJC has been committed to 'Calling the Marianist Family to Renounce the Sin of Racism.' You can access our most recent resource on this subject at: http://www.msjc.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/MSJC_Racism-Booklet-rev-7-19-16_final.pdf.