



*From the Office of the President*

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REGIS UNIVERSITY | DENVER, COLORADO

**Message on Race and Justice  
Office of the President  
June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

Dear Regis community,

In some cases, we know their names. George Floyd, killed beneath a police officer's knee in Minnesota. Breonna Taylor, shot while sleeping in her bed during a mistaken forced police home entry in Kentucky. Jogger Ahmed Aubrey, chased down and shot by vigilantes.

Then there are the thousands of black and brown lives lost to a coronavirus that is taking a disproportionate number from communities of color.

Both reflect the systemic racism that Minneapolis City Council Vice President Andrea Jenkins called a "public health issue" last week and that has been pervasive and unabated for too many decades. "Until we name this virus, this disease that has infected America for the past 400 years, we will never ever resolve this issue," Jenkins said during a press conference.

Sixty-five-year-old Gregory L. Moore, the former editor of The Denver Post, wrote this week in the Colorado Sun: "I don't hate cops. I fear them."

"I'm exhausted watching black men die at the hands of police. I hate seeing the fear in my daughters' eyes from knowing I could die, begging for air, under the knee of a police officer," Moore wrote.

In my 65 years, I haven't experienced this fear. I know I have lived a life of whiteness and privilege. Yet I have grown increasingly aware of this reality.

But this fear is shared by most people of color in our nation. Many of our colleagues at Regis and many of our friends and neighbors know this fear. It has to be exhausting. It is wrong, and it must end.

#BlackLivesMatter. I stand with you. Regis University stands with you.

In his column, Gregory Moore said police officers who abuse their power need to be held accountable for their actions. He also said they need to be better trained.



In the weeks to come, we will craft new programs and provide new trainings for ourselves and our community to continue the important discussions around police misconduct, racism, systemic racism, hate crimes, white privilege and so much more.

In the “now” time, this is what I advise:

- **Rise Up:** Speak out against racism and police aggression. Do not let hateful speech or hateful acts go unchallenged.
- **Pull Together:** Support one another. Do not let fear and hate tear us apart. Let us keep our community strong.
- **Be Open and Loving:** Let us speak openly and often about the pain, anger and challenges we face in our lives. Do not miss an opportunity to support victims, confront ignorance and teach acceptance.

For a systemic change to occur, former President Barack Obama advises both protest and politics. Yes, demonstrate peacefully (and safely). We also must VOTE. We must elect local and state officials who will respond to our demands: “... the elected officials who matter most in reforming police departments and the criminal justice system work at the state and local levels,” the former president wrote for the website Medium.

As the University wrestles with how to tackle a system of both persecution and privilege in our culture, we invite you, our community members, to share your thoughts, your dreams and your actions. Please do so by emailing [diverse@regis.edu](mailto:diverse@regis.edu).

We will do this work together. It is the only way forward.

Our nation has much to atone for and heal from. We must stand together peaceably against racism, oppression and senseless brutality. We must all take a stand against ignorance, hate and violence.

I ask you to join me in this important work.

Prayerfully,

Rev. John P. Fitzgibbons, S.J.

President