



*From the Office of the President*

**John P. Fitzgibbons, S.J.**

REGIS UNIVERSITY | DENVER, COLORADO

**Our commitment to race and justice principles  
Office of the President  
September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020**



To the Regis community:

Under the harshest of lights, race relations in the United States and the emergence of the global COVID-19 crisis have exposed the scourge of injustice in our society. With these beckoning signs of the times, and in the gathering turmoil of an election season, Regis University wishes to clarify who we are and what we stand for. In our work, mission, and, above all, in our commitment to one another as teachers, scholars, staff, students, and friends, we recommit ourselves firmly to the principles laid out in my 2017 Statement of Principles.

**We believe in the goodness of creation and the sacred dignity of all individuals, each made in the image of God, called to grow with others into the freedom of love?**

**We believe that we belong to each other, and that each person shares responsibility for the long, hard work of shaping an inclusive community where all can flourish.**

**We believe the University serves not only itself and its students but is called to be a force for justice and peace in society, above all, in defense of the poor and marginalized.**

Recognizing with humility that we are always “on the way,” and often fall short, our commitment to such principles rings hollow without a corresponding commitment to actions that rise from our Jesuit Catholic mission. “Love ought to show itself in deeds more than in words,” says St. Ignatius.

**Thus, we recommit ourselves** to the discomfort of examining our own presumptions, failures, and shortcomings, and, in our engagements with one another, we prepare ourselves to be challenged, strengthened, and transformed.

**We recommit ourselves** to exploring not only the dynamics of race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, sexuality, and culture, but also the social and structural implications of privilege, power, and social political order in America and the wider world.

**We recommit ourselves** to the defense of any and all those targeted by the forces of bigotry and hate in our society and on our campus. We will not tolerate any speech or action that violates the dignity of any human person, nor allow the principle of free speech and the free exchange of ideas, an essential good and critical to the life of the University, to be used as a front for hateful speech, symbolism, or violence. These have no place at a Jesuit, Catholic university.

### *President's Council on Race and Justice.*

At the heart of our recommitment to the long, slow work of racial justice is a willingness to examine our community's own painful history of white supremacy. In this spirit, I have formed the President's Council on Race and Justice. I have charged the Council with to examine our policies, processes, programs and traditions and to advice and counsel me where we need to correct and evolve in ways that reflect our principles and support an academic environment of inclusive excellence and equity.

Through their scholarly lenses and lived experiences, the Council will begin with a true interrogation of Regis' past—as both a Jesuit and Catholic institution. This process of uncovering difficult truths will involve everyone at Regis. Only in examining ourselves can we commit to making meaningful changes. Dr. Barbara Wilcots, Vice President of Student Affairs, and Dr. Nicki Gonzales, Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion, will chair the Council. Other members include: Dr. Marsha Tafoya (OCPD); Mr. Patrick Romero-Aldaz (Dean of Students); Dr. Chris Pramuk (Mission); Dr. Eugene Wilkerson (Anderson College); Dr. Kevin Edinburg (Regis College); Dr. Erika Freitas (RHCHP); and Ms. Eryn Rideout (President, Black Student Alliance).

### *Good Trouble Conversations*

In addition, the Office of the President has collaborated with the Offices of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Excellence, the Dean of Students, Mission, Title IV/Equal Opportunity, Human Resources, and the Bias Incident Response Team to host a series of **Good Trouble Conversations** that will provide space for facilitated discussions of current race and justice topics and ways we can all make positive change.

The series is inspired by the late Congressman and civil rights activist John Lewis, who passed away this summer. Lewis, who was beaten by police during the “Bloody Sunday” civil rights march in Selma, Alabama, called on people to “get in good trouble, necessary trouble and redeem the soul

of America.” He called on young people to be speak out, be persistent, and be non-violent in demanding transformational societal change.

*“You must find a way to get in the way and get in good trouble, necessary trouble. ... You have a moral obligation, a mission and a mandate, when you leave here, to go out and seek justice for all. You can do it. You must do it.”—John Lewis, speech to college graduates, 2016.*

### **Good Trouble Conversations are scheduled for:**

- Sept. 25, 12-1:30 p.m.

*Topic: The Intentions We Bring to Racial Justice Work<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>This session will explore the intentions and hopes that we bring to racial justice work at Regis, with the goal of staying grounded and committed when we face challenge or resistance or setback. We will start the session with a mindfulness exercise for doing racial justice work and then transition to both small and large group discussions. Please have paper and a pen or pencil handy for the opening exercise.*

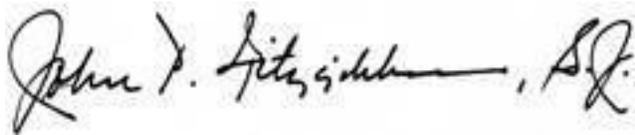
- Oct. 9, 9:30-11 am.
- Oct. 23, 12-1:30 p.m.
- Nov. 6, 12-1:30 p.m.
- Nov. 13, 12-1:30 p.m.

To join, email [diverse@regis.edu](mailto:diverse@regis.edu) for connection information. Participants will receive a special Good Trouble t-shirt, while supplies last. Once you have participated in a conversation, ODEIIE will contact you to come pick up your shirt.

**In sum**, for us, to seek the “greater glory of God” is to bear responsibility for the most vulnerable members of our university community and our society. In the words of Pope Francis, the option for solidarity “is not a political option, nor is it an ideological option, a party option... no.”

The option for love, the desire to create beloved community, “is at the center of the Gospel.” If our starting point is the love of God, a tangible love expressed in deeds and words, than we have reason to hope that Regis University can be a sign and instrument of hope that a healthier and more just world is possible.

Gratefully,



Rev. John P. Fitzgibbons, S.J.  
President

