Shall We Overcome?

June 3, 2020

Dear friends,

ICRD is heartbroken and outraged at the brutal killing of George Floyd.

Systemic racism is an illness that eats away at a community. Both conscious and, perniciously, unconscious, racism creeps into our media, our institutions, and our public policy in ways that ultimately result in gross injustices and death. This has become an unnervingly common experience. What is often touted as a stain on our history is actually quite vividly present with us today. What we might wish had been a hallmark of an imperfect past in our nation is too clearly part of the path we still tread.

Sadly, some in the United States are actively using it to deepen divides, rather than sounding the clarion call for unity in the fight for justice. America can be better than that. This nation often sees itself as a leader in the global promotion of concepts of equality, justice, and democracy. We've built an image of ourselves around giving voice to the voiceless and embracing the human dignity of all people. Yet our task still remains - to make those values a reality at home.

This demands action, but what tools will we use? How will we create a hopeful space that includes the voices of all, lifts up the marginalized, speaks truth to power, and calls attention to the grave injustices that plague our communities?

*We can call out and work against systemic racism where we see it in the world.*

*We can shed light on the work of black and brown historians, artists and religious leaders.*

*We can stand up to white supremacy, white nationalism, and extremist violence.*

*We can heal the racial divisions in our country through honest and difficult conversation and dialogue.*

ICRD has long been committed to working with faithful people of all religions to break down the drivers of misunderstanding and violence between different identity groups. We are turning our international experience toward our own community, now, and will be actively working against extremism and racism in the U.S.

Structural violence can only be addressed when we acknowledge the wounds of history and the ongoing injustices that are all around us. In peaceful, prayerful, and forthright solidarity, ICRD stands with the black community and the American public, as we mourn the loss of George Floyd - another name tragically added to a list that has continued to grow for too long. We pledge to work toward a just and inclusive America.

Warm regards,