

June 15, 2023

Dear Friends,

“Racism is a sin that constitutes a serious offence against God.” Pope St. John Paul II

On Monday, our campus will pause to observe Juneteenth, to commemorate the end of slavery in the United States. This national holiday honors the spirit of freedom, justice and resilience of black Americans, past and present. It is a celebration of history, culture and empowerment of the countless contributions made by black citizens to the life of the country. Beyond that, Juneteenth serves to remind us of the paramount importance of human dignity and the common good – which the Catholic Church holds as integral in its profound body of social teaching.

While Juneteenth is a day of celebration and remembrance, naming this holiday and having a day off to commemorate it will not suffice to bring about true justice in our society. Especially on this day, I encourage all of us to learn more about current structures of racism that still persist in our world and to pledge ourselves to the work of replacing those structures with love, acceptance and equity. We must continue to strive to make a founding dream of our nation come true – that of “liberty and justice for all.”

As we dedicate ourselves to advancing the mission of this great Catholic and Jesuit institution, we are called to leverage our care and concern for one another to continue to build an inclusive campus community and workplace, one that is increasingly defined by acceptance and love for all. Our efforts to implement our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan provide a path to guide and channel the work each of us does on our campus and beyond. While we have every reason to be encouraged by our achievements to date, please remain steadfast, knowing that our work is not yet finished.

Thank you for all you have done thus far. May I suggest that we take some time on Monday to consider prayerfully what more we can do individually and as a university to bring about a truly just and equitable society. I am inspired by the possibilities of what we can achieve together.

Yours faithfully,

Joseph G. Marina, S.J.  
President

