



## MARIAN CENTRAL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

1001 McHenry Avenue • Woodstock, IL 60098-3099

Phone (815) 338-4220 • FAX (815) 338-4253

June 4, 2020

Dear Marian Community,

I can remember seeing pictures of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Catholic priests like Fr. Hessburgh, (our own Fr. McKitrick), and Catholic sisters walking arm in arm with Dr. King during civil rights protests in the 1960s. To me, this was always an inspiring example of Catholic social teaching and justice. In 2018 the Bishops of the United States came out with a statement on Racism, calling it a "Persistent Evil" and just a few days ago the Bishops felt so compelled once again to release another statement in regard to the death of George Floyd. What this clearly demonstrates is that racism still infects our nation and there has been a continuous history of discrimination and violence towards people of color. I am personally sickened and outraged to watch yet another video of an African American man being killed before our very eyes. I stand with the Bishops' statement that these recent actions must be a wake-up call for all of us, including Marian Central, that needs to be answered by our faith, words, and actions.

To answer this call, Marian must first acknowledge its own history of racism and we must stand firm in our desire to overcome our previous sins of omission when it has come to combating racism and working toward racial reconciliation. Racism at Marian must be met head on and we will not turn a blind eye to people of color who are deprived of their human dignity, and even their lives.

It is clear to me that consistently, African Americans have been branded, by individuals, society, and sadly, even at times, by our Church and Marian Central with the message that they are inferior. This is how the US Bishops defined racism, "Racism consists in judging other persons to be inferior due to race or ethnicity. Racist actions arise from feelings of superiority." All this says is it is a failure to love our neighbor and this should be at the heart of Marian.

On behalf of Marian, I am asking all those who have been affected by racism, both within and outside of Marian for forgiveness. I am also asking all those who are connected, past and present, with Marian to stand together and fight the evil of racism by educating ourselves, reflecting on our own personal thoughts and actions, listening to the experience of those who have been affected by racism, and by supporting us as we develop programs that will help repair the damages caused by racial discrimination.

Page two

It should be noted that around Christmas (2019), Marian made the decision to devote the entire 2020-21 school year to diversity training. We have already scheduled training for our faculty and staff for the coming school year. That will be followed by training for our student population. This past year we also began a Catholic Social Justice Club, and its main purpose is to address this type of situation. This is just a beginning, we know, but it is a start.

I would like to end with a prayer that is important to me:

*Oh, my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell  
And lead all souls to heaven,  
especially those in most need of thy mercy.*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Shukis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "M" and "S".

Mike Shukis  
Superintendent