

June 5, 2020

Letter to the Editor

We Grieve Yet Believe

We grieve the death of Mr. George Floyd. His death was an injustice with disastrous consequences for all of us. This tragedy goes well beyond policing and is a stark reminder of the deep divisions in our society. Because of the clear injustice of Mr. Floyd's death, all of America is closely watching what unfolds. But we need to look deeper and ask how our country could have come to such a place. We are all complicit in this, by what we say and do and by what we fail to say and do.

From other police officers, we learn that the actions of these officers were contrary to official training and without justification. It is fundamental: when a person is arrested and controlled, the police officer's duty is to protect that person.

We respect our law enforcement professionals. Their jobs are dangerous and the vast majority rise to meet their professional responsibilities in the face of that danger. Many have laid their lives on the line for us. Yet we join the broad, bi-partisan condemnation of the death of Mr. Floyd. We call for justice for him and his family.

While we share the anger and outrage precipitated by this latest example of injustice, yet we also decry the rioting that has ensued, just as we condemn the motivations of those who seek to perpetrate violence or exploit it for their own agendas.

Mr. Floyd's death needs to be a catalyst for renewal. We must work with civil authorities to remove the obstacles to constructive relationships and mutual accountability. We must re-commit to healing our communities.

Hatred and violence never heal divisions. There is a better way, perhaps the only way. From our perspective, it begins by accepting that we are all one in God's love. But, regardless of individual faith, or absence of faith, we must overcome suspicion and mistrust with respect and understanding, civility and friendship. We can set aside the extremes that divide us.

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