

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.”