

**Introductory Remarks by Father Robert L. Niehoff, SJ  
Rally for Racial Justice and Equality  
JCU Campus—December 4, 2014**

When it is hard for us to find peace in our hearts, peace with our neighbor or peace in the world, we turn to our Creator.

In the context of recent events in Ferguson, Cleveland, New York and elsewhere, we pray to be open to the pain in our world and for recognition of our own role in the many injustices and micro-aggressions around us.

As we look to the moral leadership of our University community and the moral leadership of our patron St. Ignatius, we are required, and I emphasize required, to pray for peace, to pray for justice, and to devote ourselves to this higher purpose and greater good and to solidarity.

In October 2000, I was present when Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., Superior General of the Society of Jesus, addressed a Jesuit university Justice Conference with this challenge to live in solidarity with those who suffer injustice. I quote Father Kolvenbach:

*Solidarity is learned through contact rather than concepts. When the heart is touched by direct experience, the mind may be challenged to change. Personal involvement with innocent suffering, with the injustice others suffer, is a catalyst for solidarity which then gives rise to intellectual inquiry and moral reflection*

*Students, in the course of their formation, must let the gritty reality of this world into their lives, so they can learn to feel it, think about it critically, respond to its suffering and engage it constructively.*

Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., Superior General of the Society of Jesus  
Keynote Address at Santa Clara University's Justice Conference, October 6, 2000

Today, we are gathering to place ourselves more deeply in solidarity with those who have and are now suffering racial injustice. We are confronting the sin of racial injustice, which has a long and terrible history in our nation and globally, so that we can learn to feel it, think about it critically, respond to its suffering, and engage it constructively to build a more just world beginning right here on our campus.

Now let us turn to our God in prayer....