



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
8/21/2017

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Arizona Faith Leaders Issue Statement About President Trump's Visit to Phoenix

ARIZONA, August 21, 2017 – Members of the Bishops and Executives Roundtable have issued a statement in advance of President Trump's visit to Phoenix and in the wake of the demonstration in Charlottesville, Virginia that left one woman dead and many people injured.

The bishops' statement comes in advance of a gathering of interfaith faith leaders on Tuesday night outside the Phoenix Convention Center that will create a Safe Sanctuary Zone amid the actions planned by social activist groups.

<<STATEMENT AND SIGNATORIES>>

As leaders of our faith traditions in Arizona, we, the undersigned members of the Bishops and Executives Roundtable, join our voices to affirm the value of every human being. We stand together to bear witness to what is happening in our streets, offering a truthful counternarrative to stories that blame victims and rationalize bodily harm and murder. We name as evil the thoughts, words, and deeds of white supremacy because they violate the image of God in which every human being is created.

We acknowledge our words are strong ones. We are mindful of the victims of racially motivated violence in our nation, most recently in Charlottesville, VA. May the comfort and healing of God be with them and with their families. It is because of that tragedy and others like it we have chosen this moment to speak out. Our words reflect the call of ones to whom we look as prophets, and the teachings of our sacred texts: to maintain justice and do what is right.

In these days, words, even strong words, are not enough. Our days require non-violent action.

Toppling monuments will not topple the injustices they immortalize. Yet, the time has come to retire the symbols that glorify and perpetuate racism in our culture, and to relegate them to settings where they can be explained for what they are.

The time is long overdue to dismantle policies that perpetuate discrimination, white privilege, exclusion, fear, and hate in all our American institutions: government, business, schools, courts, and yes, even in our own



communities of faith. We pledge ourselves to that end in the public and private sectors of our society. And we pledge to examine ourselves as we seek to root out any vestiges of racism in our own hearts.

This is not the time to leave unaccountable public officials who have used their power and positions to harm other persons based on their skin color or ethnicity. Sin has consequences even when forgiven.

We recall the courageous words of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. “Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable. Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.” We call on every person who rejects racism and violence and embraces equality and justice—people of every faith and people of no particular faith – to stand with us in this sacred and historic moment as we work together to build the future of human love and unity we hope for ourselves and for one another.

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Rev. Richie Sanchez
Interim Regional Minister & President
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ABOUT ARIZONA FAITH NETWORK – The mission of Arizona Faith Network is to bring together people of faith, under the inspiration of God, as a bridge to understanding and action. We dedicate our mission to building understanding between people through education and dialogue; we dedicate ourselves to action through inviting people of different faiths to work together for a better world, one based on the virtues of peace, respect and justice. For more information, visit <http://www.azfaithnetwork.org>

Rev. Dr. William M. Lyons is available for interviews concerning the statement.

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