



Justice Office
1884 Randolph Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55105

June 19, 2017

The fatal shooting of Philando Castile, the trial, and now the not guilty verdict in the trial St. Anthony police officer Jeronimo Yanez have evoked many emotions including shock, fear, pain, sorrow, frustration, and anger. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Paul Province, are deeply moved and join in prayer for the family of Philando Castile, Diamond Reynolds and her daughter in the response to the trial's verdict. We also hold in prayer, Officer Jeronimo Yanez and his family, along with all of us, who must live with the results of his actions, and those officers in public service who, daily, must respond to life and death situations.

We call to mind the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. **“We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”** We are all affected by these events. The use of violent force in our society is leaving in its wake too many hearts and spirits shattered by indescribable suffering.

The heart of the CSJ mission and charism of unifying love is our deep commitment to be “prophetic signs of unity in our world.” We seek to collaborate with others in working for systemic change that will enable all to live in right relationships and promote a more just world. Therefore we stand with our sisters and brothers who are victims of violence.

We urge our elected officials and our entire community to address issues that demean or deny people their human dignity. We ask our criminal justice systems and law enforcement to pursue policies and trainings that encourage viable, realistic alternatives to the use of deadly force and will help to reduce a dangerous and growing sense of fear experienced by and of law enforcement. We ask our elected officials to consider legislation that will address systemic injustices resulting from current law.

We turn to the God of mercy and peace to give us the strength to be nonviolent forces of change. We are all called to conversion that comes through authentic mutuality, seeking to live in an interdependent, multicultural society because again in the words of Dr. King, **“no group can make it alone.”** Together let us continue to work toward a world where justice, healing, and peace prevail over fear.