



Statement by His Excellency Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Observer of the Holy See  
to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva

at the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council

Urgent Debate on the “*current racially inspired human rights violations, systemic racism,  
police brutality and the violence against peaceful protest*”

Geneva, 18 June 2020

Madam President,

The Delegation of the Holy See wishes to reiterate its consistent and firm conviction that racial discrimination in all its forms is absolutely intolerable.

All members of the human family, made in the image and likeness of God are equal *in their inherent dignity*, regardless of his or her race, nation, sex, origin, culture or religion. States are called to recognize, defend and promote the fundamental human rights of each person.<sup>1</sup>

Pope Francis has urged: “The time has come to put an end to age-old prejudices, preconceptions and mutual mistrust that are often at the base of discrimination, racism and xenophobia. No one must feel isolated, and no one is authorized to trample on the dignity and rights of others.”<sup>2</sup> In fact, to tread on the inviolable dignity of others is also to tread on our own.

“We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life. At the same time, we have to recognize that violence is self-destructive and self-defeating. Nothing is gained by violence and so much is lost”.<sup>3</sup>

Thank you, Madam President.

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<sup>1</sup> Cfr. Catechism of Catholic Church (CCC), 1935.

<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis, Meeting with the Participants in the Pilgrimage of Gypsies, 25 Oct. 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Pope Francis, Wednesday General Audience, 3 June 2020.