



York Catholic District School Board

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Dear Students, Families and Staff,

Recent events over the last few days in the US and Canada have created justifiable feelings of anger, outrage, trauma and emotional fatigue. These events clearly pinpoint that, as a society, we have failed to reflect on the lethal impact of the persistence of Anti-Black Racism. The ongoing senseless acts of violence, harm and disrespect against black people has to stop.

We at the York Catholic District School Board acknowledge that we cannot be complicit and that we have to do our part to address Anti-Black Racism in a way that is accountable and transformational. We understand that these events are weighing heavily on all of us, socially, emotionally and psychologically. To this end, York Catholic recognizes that we have a responsibility to our students and families to support them during this traumatic time. But that is not enough. We are committed to taking culturally responsible, relevant and sustainable actions, both in and out of our classrooms, that will propel us forward in our quest to stop Anti-Black Racism.

As a Catholic school board we want to assure our students and families that we will continue to engage you in a collaborative way that provides ongoing support, and creates a safe and caring environment. Our thoughts and prayers are with everyone who is impacted by these recent events and who may be struggling during this very difficult time. We encourage you to discuss these events at home and to watch for signs of any fears and anxieties that you or your children may experience.

We pray for all families impacted by these events. We honour the dignity of all life because we are all God's children. We pray for each other, that we may take action against racism and all forms of violence, and that our hearts are filled with compassion, respect and a hunger for justice.

A Prayer for Courage, Justice and Community

Guiding Spirit, help us to be quick to speak up for justice. Help us to be a comforter to others, to listen and not always speak, to understand more and judge less. Grant us the grace of welcoming others, the courage to take risks, the confidence to declare Your love and Your praise. For every brave word, deed, gift and touch that challenges cruelty and heals the hurting, we give thanks and pray for equal courage in our walk with each other and with You. We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

If you need assistance with coping strategies during these difficult times, you are encouraged to seek guidance from your teachers and Principals. They can assist in directing you to the proper support which is also available from our Chaplaincy team, Mental Health team and our Human Rights and Equity Advisor, Nalini Jugnundan. Ms. Jugnundan can be reached at nalini.jugnundan@ycdsb.ca

For your ease of reference, we are also providing some community and mental health resources, which you may find helpful:

- [Catholic Community Services of York Region](#)
- [Caribbean African Canadian \(CAFCAN\) Social Services](#)
- [Midaynta Community Services](#)
- [Harriet Tubman Youth Support Line](#)

Yours in Catholic Education,



Maria Marchese
Chair, Board of Trustees



Ab Falconi
Director of Education