



October 30, 2020

Response to a Recent Incident at Assumption High School, Davenport

From Bishop Thomas Zinkula, Bishop of Davenport:

Some people have requested a statement from me in response to a recent incident at Assumption High School involving a racist TikTok video. The Catholic Church has taken a strong stance against racism. Recently, in their recent pastoral letter, *Open Wide Our Hearts*, the U.S. Bishops stated: “Every racist act—every such comment, every joke, every disparaging look as a reaction to the color of skin, ethnicity, or place of origin—is a failure to acknowledge another person as a brother or sister, created in the image of God. In these and in many other such acts, the sin of racism persists in our lives, in our country, and in our world.”

As Election Day rapidly approaches, I also am reminded of a passage in *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizen* that includes racist behavior in a short list of examples of intrinsically evil acts. In my capacity as the bishop of the Diocese of Davenport, I have written and preached regularly on the topic of racism. I regret and reproach any racist behavior in our parishes, schools and other institutions. I have been in communication with the administration at Assumption. They are taking this matter very seriously and will be implementing a series of action steps to address it.

This past summer, in the wake of the protests and civil unrest related to the killing of George Floyd, I met with some of our diocesan leaders on a number of occasions to discuss how our local church might respond. One of the things we talked about was addressing the issue of racism in a more intentional manner in our Catholic schools and faith formation programs. We will continue to strive to improve the education and formation of our children and youth on this important topic. We need to do all we can to help them recognize, resist and renounce racist behaviors and structures. It is a matter of all of us opening wide our hearts to the grace of conversion.