Dear Carrollton Community,

The academic year that has just ended has been a year of highs and lows, joys and frustration, accomplishments and challenges. Most recently we have been made painfully aware of shortcomings in our school with regard to curriculum, conduct, and a consciousness of how behaviors can reflect personal and systemic racism. I have read the posts on @blackatcarrollton with a mixture of shock, shame, deep sadness, and frustration. When asked what I intend to do about it, my response is that at this time our first step must be to read and to listen, and we must do so without getting defensive. The stories on this page should and will become a part of the education of our community. We can and must learn from them. If we truly want to create spaces where we foster understanding and change, then we should be open to honest feedback, acknowledge that we sometimes get it wrong, and welcome recommendations for ways we can be better.

To this end, Carrollton is creating task forces at the Board and School level to address these issues conscientiously and systematically. There is no quick and easy solution. The School Task Force is being Chaired by Ms. Ebony Rhodes, Director of Community Relations. You will be hearing from her in the future regarding the make-up and process of the various subcommittees of the Task Force and can contact her at this email: erhodes@carrollton.org. For anyone interested in beginning to learn about things you were most likely not taught during your schooling, I recommend this disturbing but important article in National Geographic Magazine.

We can turn these lows into highs by rising to meet the challenge to become a better Carrollton, as we move into and create our future. The work of building a world of Christ’s love, the world we want, and our children deserve, requires efforts of deep reflection, profound honesty, and open dialogue. In their 2018 pastoral letter against racism, “Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love,” the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops wrote:

As Christians, we are called to listen and know the stories of our brothers and sisters. We must create opportunities to hear, with open hearts, the tragic stories that are deeply imprinted on the lives of our brothers and sisters, if we are to be moved with empathy to promote justice.

Love compels each of us to resist racism courageously. It requires us to reach out generously to the victims of this evil, to assist the conversion needed in those who still harbor racism, and to begin to change policies and structures that allow racism to persist.

I know that Carrollton can and will become even better when we commit to this path because we have all seen what our students are capable of achieving. I know our community has what it takes to rise to our challenges because I have seen the grace, compassion, and generosity displayed during the many lows brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. On the Feast of the
Sacred Heart, Juneteenth, Sr. Barbara Dawson RSCJ, Superior General of the Society, shared this reflection with the Sacred Heart Community:

“The CALL I heard from Sophie is a call to SOLIDARITY:
ENTER INTO THE PIERCED HEART OF JESUS, EXPERIENCE THE SUFFERING OF GOD’S PEOPLE AND ALL CREATION, BE IN SOLIDARITY WITH EACH OTHER AND WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE SUFFERING, DO NOT SIT AND WAIT, DISCOVER ANEW THE WAYS FOR OUR TIME TO MANIFEST GOD’S LOVE.”

Yours in faith, hope, and love,
Olen