

RESOLUTION #3

ON SUPPORTING RACIAL JUSTICE THROUGH POLICE REFORM

The following resolution is proposed by the following members of the Clergy and Laity of parishes within the Episcopal Diocese of Washington:

Submitted by: The Rev. Dr. Joan E. Beilstein, Ascension, Sligo Parish; Ms. Jane Alperson, Ascension, Sligo Parish; Ms. Jacki Smith, Ascension, Sligo Parish; Church of the Ascension Policing Action Committee: Anne LeVeque, Annemarie Quigley, Dr. Annie Woodley Brown, Denise Young, Franz Canon, Jacki Smith, Susan Poling; the Rev. Dr. Sari Ateek, Rector, St. John's, Norwood Parish; the Rev. Deacon Anne Derse, St. John's, Norwood Parish; Ms. Lisa Raisner, St. John's, Norwood Parish.

RESOLUTION

1 Resolved,
2 that the Diocese of Washington, as part of its Strategic Plan's Equity and Justice objective, examine
3 the role systemic racism plays in policing in order to identify ways in which it can contribute to dismantling
4 racist practices in policing; and be it further
5 Resolved,
6 that the Diocese of Washington leverage its regional organization to support and encourage congregations
7 and their members, *including those active in law enforcement*, to work for meaningful reform of policing and
to recognize that the root causes
8 of dysfunctional policing are multifaceted and complex and should be addressed with discernment;
9 and be it further
10 Resolved,
11 that the Diocese of Washington encourage more mutually supportive relations between police and citizens,
12 by working with policymakers and leaders ~~to take action against harmful policing~~ *to eliminate police policies*
and practices that harm individuals and communities and by supporting
13 liaison activities that facilitate honest communication and promote healthy engagement among police,
14 the public, and community groups and institutions.

EXPLANATION:

Recent events have shown once again that deep systemic wounds left by our nation's original sin of slavery and its legacies continue. These wounds will not heal unless they become a priority for our entire faith community.

Through General Convention resolutions, the Church has committed to being an antiracist church [Resolutions 1991 D043, D113], holding that racism is a sin [Resolution 1991 B051], that the Church was complicit in maintaining the heinous institution of slavery [Resolution 2006 A123]; that the Church, out of growth and atonement, should embrace restorative justice [Resolution 2006 A127], and that the church should enter into dialogue, listening exercises, strategic partnerships, and internal analysis to address systemic racial disparities and injustice in the Church and the wider culture [Resolution 2015 A182].

Continuing this commitment, the Diocese of Washington recently identified Equity and Justice as one of the three major objectives of its five-year Strategic Plan. In keeping with the vision of the Strategic Plan, this resolution focuses on policing reform as a necessary step in dismantling racism.

Trust between law enforcement agencies and the people they are pledged to protect and serve is essential, but the trust is currently broken with many citizens. This trust is key to the stability of all our communities and the safe and effective delivery of policing services. People

of color, and black men in particular, have suffered such extreme injustices in our society that the Church has a responsibility to act on behalf of the safety of all God's children.

Among other steps, the Diocese of Washington could:

- Support reforms aimed at restructuring the way in which police officers are screened and trained for the jobs that communities have given them to do;
- Identify ways in which the Diocese and its member congregations can support good faith efforts to improve relations between communities and police forces, letting both know that the Church is interested and willing to be involved in these efforts and has resources to share;
- Become aware of and throw light on community concerns around policing that are not reflected in any formal documents;
- Engage in continuing dialogue with its regions and parishes to provide guidelines for and receive information on policing reform efforts

The U.S. Conference of Mayors Working Group on Police Reform and Racial Justice published in June 2020 a Statement of Principles for moving forward on reform and justice.

The report stated: "We know that now is the time to renew the compact between people and the police, to restore trust and accountability, to rebuild legitimacy, and to reimagine policing in our country."

As Episcopalians, we should lend our voices and efforts to this work of renewal.