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**STATEMENT OF ARCHBISHOP CHARLES J. CHAPUT, O.F.M. CAP.  
REGARDING RACIAL VIOLENCE IN CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA**

Racism is a poison of the soul. It's the ugly, original sin of our country, an illness that has never fully healed. Blending it with the Nazi salute, the relic of a regime that murdered millions, compounds the obscenity. Thus the wave of public anger about white nationalist events in Charlottesville this weekend is well warranted. We especially need to pray for those injured in the violence.

But we need more than pious public statements. If our anger today is just another mental virus displaced tomorrow by the next distraction or outrage we find in the media, nothing will change. Charlottesville matters. It's a snapshot of our public unraveling into real hatreds brutally expressed; a collapse of restraint and mutual respect now taking place across the country. We need to keep the images of Charlottesville alive in our memories. If we want a different kind of country in the future, we need to start today with a conversion in our own hearts, and an insistence on the same in others. That may sound simple. But the history of our nation and its tortured attitudes toward race proves exactly the opposite.

*+Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.  
Archbishop of Philadelphia*

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