



COMISSÃO DOMINICANA DE JUSTIÇA E PAZ DO BRASIL

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CAMPAIGN

“At home or out on the streets, we want to breathe”

“I’m at home, calm down!” was the message from the 14-year-old black teenager, **João Pedro**, to his mother, moments before he was murdered on May 18 this year, in São Gonçalo, Rio de Janeiro. A week later, **George Floyd**, the 46-year-old African-American, in Minneapolis, United States, struggled to say “I can’t breathe,” while his neck was pinned to the ground by the knee of a white police officer on the 25th. The two were murdered in a scenario of brutal police violence.

We are living through very difficult times. Public health, political, economic and ecological crises and crises of many other types. Despite our different life experiences, including that of faith, fear takes over in many situations, and uncertainty and insecurity overpower us. It is an ethical imperative to recognize the pain of our fellow human beings. It mobilizes us and motivates us to move beyond indignation into solidarity and compassion.

It is in this context that we, the Brazilian Dominican Commission for Justice and Peace - as disciples in solidarity with Jesus and Lilia Azevedo, our friend and teacher, whose 12th Easter Anniversary we celebrated ten days ago - are launching, in audacious solidarity, the Campaign “**At home or out on the streets, we want to breathe**”, which consists of:

writing A SINGLE message, 5-6 lines maximum, giving your name, profession, city/town, state and country (in Portuguese, English, French or Spanish), to the families of João Pedro and George Floyd, murdered by the police, victims of racism and so many other types of violence and discrimination.

These messages should be sent **by midnight of Tuesday next, June 16th** to the e-mail: querorespirar@dominicanos.org.br (children can send drawings!). The important thing is that we speak out, expressing our indignation and anguish: “we can't take it any longer”. Our cry is: “without Justice, there is no Peace”. We demand, like Bartolomeu de Las Casas, “all rights for all people”. Our Campaign is also inspired by the Prophet Isaiah who announced: “The fruit of Justice is Peace” (Is. 32,17).

All the messages received will be faithfully translated into Portuguese and English and sent to the families and communities of João Pedro and George Floyd. They will also be published on the social networks of our Commission. When you receive this letter, we ask you to immediately set aside half an hour of your time to multiply this same Letter to all your contacts and networks and write and send your own Message. We will thus dynamize our Campaign, adding it to those already underway.

The Campaign needs volunteers to be ready to carry out the necessary translations. If you could be one, in a gesture of solidarity, introduce yourself through the same email. We would also like to let you know that in the neighborhood where George Floyd was murdered

there is a parish, where the pastor is a Dominican friar, Fr. Jerry Stookey, an activist in international solidarity.

With Pope Francis, we proclaim: “We cannot tolerate or close our eyes to any form of racism or exclusion”. This campaign is ours. It belongs to all of us! Let’s get to work! This particular Campaign mode is only justified because of Covid-19; otherwise, we would be on the streets.

Goiânia, Brasil, June 9, 2020.

Frei José Fernandes Alves, OP
Coordinator of the Brazilian Dominican Commission for Justice and Peace and
Provincial Prior of the Frei Bartolomeu de Las Casas Province