

# More bishops issue statement against president's tweets on Baltimore

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Three more U.S. bishops spoke out Aug. 2 on a recent spate of tweets by President Donald Trump against the city of Baltimore.

“Painfully, for the past several weeks we find ourselves once more discussing how people, even our national leaders, use language that is divisive and disrespectful,” said a brief joint statement from three chairmen of U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ committees. “Such language is absolutely incompatible with the teaching of Jesus Christ.”

The statement came almost a week after President Donald Trump called the city “disgusting” and a place where “no human being would want to live,” among other insults.

It was signed by Bishop Nelson J. Perez of Cleveland, chair of the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church; Bishop Shelton J. Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, Louisiana, chair of the Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism; and Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Florida, chair of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori was one of the first Catholic bishops to speak out July 27.

“It saddens me to see Baltimore severely denigrated by President Trump,” he said via Twitter. “Baltimore is near and dear to my heart. It is hometown to more than half a million people. Baltimore has its tragedies and challenges but also its strengths and opportunities. Many good people are working together to address Baltimore’s challenges and to build on its strengths. They deserve the support of elected officials and their fellow citizens.”

In the Aug. 2 statement, the three bishops said that, “like Archbishop Lori, we were

deeply saddened by the denigration of the city of Baltimore in recent public discourse, especially given Bishop Fabre's recent participation in a very powerful and fruitful listening session in that city on the issue of racism."

They said constructive dialogue requires mutual respect and the "recognition that each and every person shares in the same inalienable human dignity regardless of their race or national origin."

"If we embrace this vision of public discussion and dialogue, as we state in the bishops' recent pastoral letter on racism, 'Open Wide Our Hearts, ' the headlines we see all too often today will become lessons from the past,'" they said.

Washington Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory also had spoken out on the comments by Trump and others about Baltimore, saying those remarks and the responses they have generated "have deepened divisions and diminished our national life."

"We must all take responsibility to reject language that ridicules, condemns, or vilifies another person because of their race, religion, gender, age, culture or ethnic background," the archbishop said Aug. 1. "Such discourse has no place on the lips of those who confess Christ or who claim to be civilized members of society."

The archbishop made the remarks in a Q-and-A with the Catholic Standard, Washington's archdiocesan newspaper.

*Also see:*

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