

May 31, 2020

**Dear Friends and Families of
Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School,**

How should the Cristo Rey community react to the tragedy of George Floyd and to other horrific events that seem endemic in our fractured society today?

We reject all forms of hatred and racism and violence. They run counter to the principals of all our faiths, to our sense of decency and to our system of democracy - and yet hatred and racism and violence seem unchecked in America today. But, how should we react? What can we do if we want to end hatred and racism and violence?



Certainly, violence in reaction to violence is not effective. But sanctimonious condemnations whenever examples of hatred excite the popular news seem equally ineffective.

Ninety eight percent of Cristo Rey students are children of color. They are precious to us, to their families, to their community and to God. We believe that they are destined for leadership in Philadelphia and the world.

Cristo Rey schools exist across the country because some children have been systematically denied the kind of education that is essential for becoming a leader in 21st century America. That systematic denial virtually assures their exclusion from a future of influence, leadership and prosperity.

Denying education is a worldwide and age-old strategy for maintaining classism and racial inequity, and it works effectively today in Philadelphia and across America. Denying someone an education today is similar to a knee on the neck. It is less dramatic and insidious, so, it doesn't make the nightly news and it doesn't incite outrage. Nevertheless, our system of education destroys human potential and divides our community on a cataclysmic scale.

At Cristo Rey, we believe that our mission is to offer high quality, modern education to children who would otherwise be denied. We believe in the power of truth, justice, compassion and love. We believe that our students will become leaders in Philadelphia and America, and they will champion the elimination of hatred and racism and violence from our world.

Our mission is relevant and timely and effective. We reject all forms of hatred and racism and violence. Our reaction to the tragedy of George Floyd is to recommit ourselves to the importance of our students and the urgency of our mission.

Sincerely,

John McConnell

Founder and President

