



COLLEGE OF  
MOUNT SAINT VINCENT

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

February 14, 2022

Dear Students, Faculty, Staff, and Administrators,

Last week, the Sisters of Charity Federation shared findings from research it has conducted regarding the historical involvement in the institution of slavery by the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph's and the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in the United States between 1809 and 1865. While this historical analysis suggests that neither the College of Mount Saint Vincent nor our founders, the Sisters of Charity of New York, were directly involved in any activities related to, or ownership of, enslaved persons, we are deeply saddened to learn that some early Sisters and Daughters benefited from a system of slavery—which stands in stark contrast to our values, our commitment to building a just society, and who we are today.

We unequivocally condemn the institution of slavery, and racism and bigotry in all forms. The College of Mount Saint Vincent and other institutions in the Catholic tradition must always examine the lasting effects and impact of slavery and structural racism on our communities. As our mission states: *At Mount Saint Vincent, a student's education extends beyond knowledge, skills, and preparation for work. We seek the development of the whole person and foster an understanding of our common humanity, a commitment to human dignity, and a full appreciation of our obligations to each other.*

As we have received the Federation's findings, it is our obligation to not only reaffirm our mission and values, but to come together as a College community to build upon our work towards a just society. Our work is not finished. Moving forward, we will continue to recognize and combat the lasting effects and impact of slavery and structural racism. In the Spring of 2021, I convened the College's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee that includes representatives of our faculty, staff, administrators, and students. In the context of the growing national discourse about systemic racism across various American institutions and systems, we intend to further develop curricular and co-curricular initiatives, reflect on progress we have made on issues of equity, inclusion, and community, and re-energize our personal and collective commitments to doing ever more effective anti-racism work in the future.

Sincerely,

Susan R. Burns, Ph.D.  
President