

## A Message from Fr. Val

On Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, in the early evening, I ran across a contract worker here at St. Patrick's, Ms. Lina, and parishioner John Hopkins. We started talking about the horrific murder of George Floyd. His death, as well as that of Ahmaud Arbery, the Georgia jogger gunned down, are recent names added to a long litany of black men--and women--"lynched" in our nation.

I asked Ms. Lina if her three children are scared. She told me that they were too young. Then, Ms. Lina added, "**But I am (scared).**"

Ms. Lina is the epitome of gentleness, and a woman with a deep faith in Jesus. She and her husband have a great young family. (Ms. Lina gave me permission to share this conversation which I had with her.)



"**But I am (scared).**"

***It's that systemic racism which has kneed the necks of so many persons of color in varied ways for centuries in our nation.*** As a white man, I apologized to Ms. Lina. She told me that in no way have I shown it to her.

I don't know. I wonder how that systemic racism has shown through me, I being raised right here in Memphis. Yes, I do apologize. There needs to be an ongoing examination of conscience in our nation and church. On so many levels, that systemic racism needs to be faced, and apologized for, and amendments made. Conversion is always hard to come by.

I read that, on the night before his martyrdom here in Memphis, **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** said this: "**But somewhere I read of the freedom of assembly. Somewhere I read of the freedom of speech. Somewhere I read of the freedom of the press. Somewhere I read that the greatness of America is the right to protest for right.**"

As church here at St. Patrick's, let's get it "right."