



YOUTH AS PROTAGONISTS OF CHANGE IN OUR CHURCH AND SOCIETY



Christ leads. We accompany.

Naperville Youth Ministry Deanery
– Jan 23, 2021

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Director of Diversity and Inclusion

Lord, I Need You

**Lord I come, I confess
Bowing here, I find my rest
Without You, I fall apart
You're the one that guides my heart**

**Lord, I need You, oh I need You
Every hour, I need You
My one defense, my righteousness
Oh God, how I need You**

**Where sin runs deep, Your grace is more
Where grace is found is where You are
And where You are, Lord I am free
Holiness is Christ in me**

**Lord, I need You, oh I need You
Every hour, I need You
My one defense, my righteousness
Oh God, how I need You**

**My one defense, my righteousness
Oh God, how I need You**



**SAINT MARTIN DE PORRES:
PRAY FOR US.**

PRAYER FOR PEACE IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Let us pray . . .
O Lord our God, in your mercy and kindness, no thought of ours is left unnoticed, no desire or concern ignored.

You have proven that blessings abound when we fall on our knees in prayer, and so we turn to you in our hour of need. Surrounded by violence and cries for justice, we hear your voice telling us what is required... “Only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Mi 6:8).

Fill us with your mercy so that we, in turn, may be merciful to others. Strip away pride, suspicion, and racism so that we may seek peace and justice in our communities.

Strengthen our hearts so that they beat only to the rhythm of your holy will. Flood our path with your light as we walk

humbly toward a future filled with encounter and unity.

Be with us, O Lord, in our efforts, for only by the prompting of your grace can we progress toward virtue.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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SERVANT OF GOD, AUGUSTUS TOLTON:
PRAY FOR US.

OUTLINE

WHAT WE HOPE TO DISCUSS TODAY:

- WHAT DOES THE CATHOLIC CHURCH CALL US TO DO REGARDING EQUALITY AND RACISM
- REFLECTION ON OUR EXPERIENCES
- DISCUSSION ABOUT THE ROLE YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE IN ADDRESSING THESE ISSUES AND HOW THE CHURCH CAN SUPPORT THEM
- TIME FOR QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

WHAT IS RACISM?

WHAT DOES THE CHURCH SAY?

1. **Open Wide Our Hearts: A Pastoral Letter Against Racism.** USCCB, 2018
Top 5 Lessons from Pastoral Letter Against Racism (VIDEO) – Catholic Mobilizing Network: <https://catholicsmobilizing.org/pastoral-letter-video>
2. **The Catholic Church and the Black Lives Matter Movement: The Racial Divide in the United States Revisited** – A Pastoral Letter by Bishop Edward Braxton. 2016
3. **Made in the Image and Likeness of God: A Pastoral Letter on Racial Harmony**, by Archbishop Alfred C. Hughes, S.T.D. 2006
4. **Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself: U.S. Catholic Bishops Speak Against Racism.** – USCCB, 2001
5. **Dwell In My Love: A Pastoral Letter on Racism**, by Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I. 2001
6. **What We've Seen and Heard: A Pastoral Letter on Evangelization from the Black Bishops of the United States.** 1984
7. **Brothers and Sisters to Us: U.S. Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter on Racism.** 1979

WHAT IS RACISM?

WHAT IS RACISM?

- The U.S. bishops define racism in their pastoral letter, “Open Wide Our Hearts” (2018) as such:

“Racism arises when—either consciously or unconsciously—a person holds that his or her own race or ethnicity is superior, and therefore judges persons of other races or ethnicities as inferior and unworthy of equal regard. When this conviction or attitude leads individuals or groups to exclude, ridicule, mistreat, or unjustly discriminate against persons on the basis of their race or ethnicity, it is sinful.”

Racism occurs because a person ignores the fundamental truth that, because all humans share common origin, they are all brothers and sisters, all equally made in the image of God.

OPPORTUNITIES



RACISM AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Opportunities to address racism in the Catholic Church

- Catholic Social Teaching (CST)
 - “Racism is a life issue” – being pro-life = being anti-racist
 - Founded on the basic truth that all lives have dignity because we are made in the image and likeness of God
- “Catholic” = “universal”
 - we are the most diverse religious community in the world
 - we can tap into the diversity in our local Catholic communities as well
- We have been addressing systemic issues as a Church for a long time:
 - Catholic Relief Services / Catholic Charities
 - Catholic Worker Movement
 - Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD)

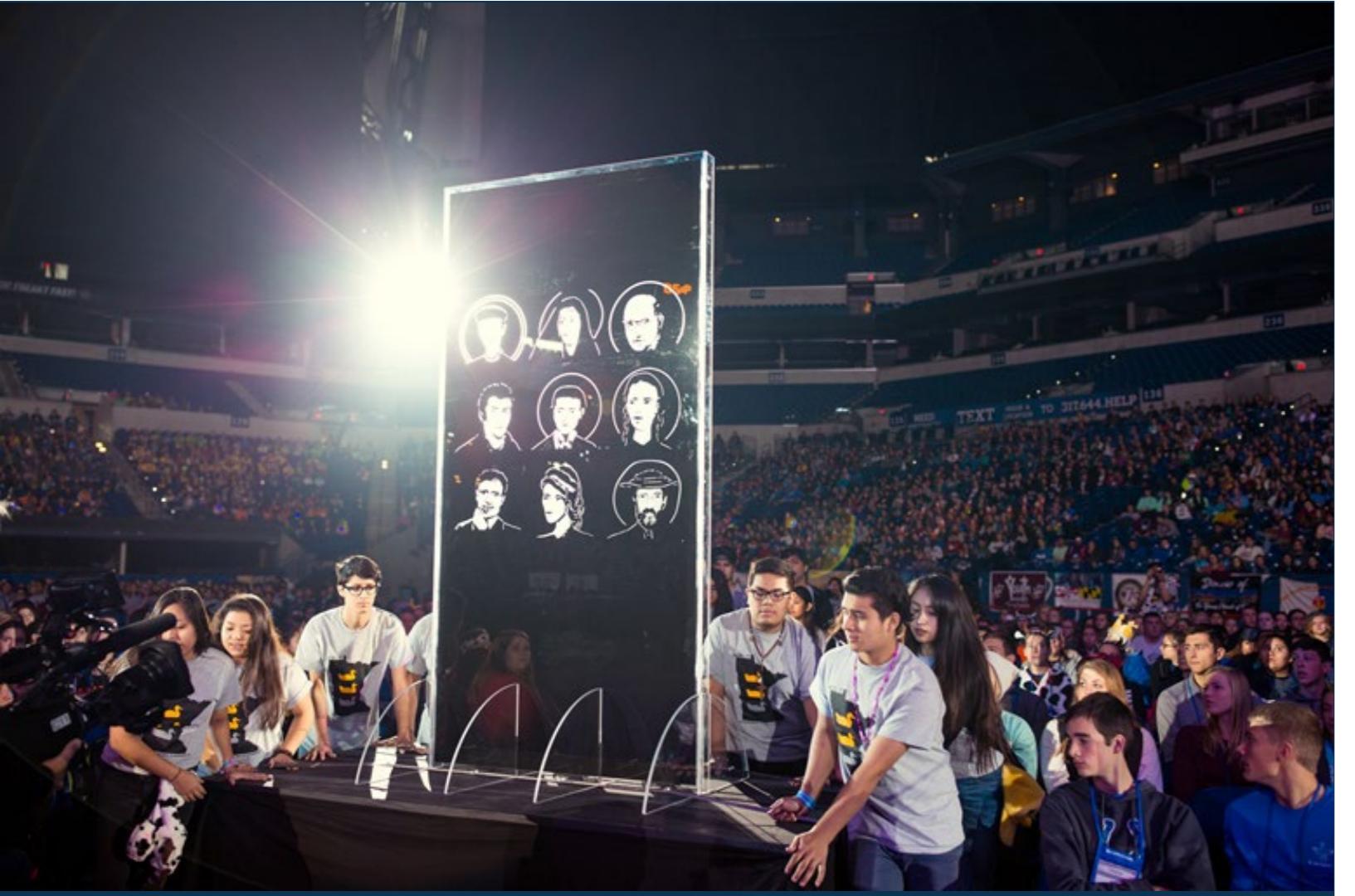
YOUTH



WHAT MATTERS TO YOUNG PEOPLE?

- Gen Z is the most diverse generation we have ever had in U.S. history, and the first that will be majority non-white. ([iGen's Political and Civic Outlook, 2016](#))
- Only 33% of Gen Z believe minorities have equal opportunity for success. Compare that to 43% of all other generations combined. ([iGen's Political and Civic Outlook, 2016](#))
- 72% of [Gen Z] consider racial equality to be one of the most important issue today, 64% say gender equality and 48% say sexual orientation equality. ([The Power of Gen Z Influence, 2018](#))

YOUTH



WHAT MATTERS TO YOUNG PEOPLE?

I want to encourage all of you in this effort, because I know that “your young hearts want to build a better world. I have been following news reports of the many young people throughout the world who have taken to the streets to express the desire for a more just and fraternal society. Young people taking to the streets! The young want to be protagonists of change. Please, do not leave it to others to be protagonists of change. You are the ones who hold the future! Through you, the future enters into the world. I ask you also to be protagonists of this transformation. You are the ones who hold the key to the future! Continue to fight apathy and to offer a Christian response to the social and political troubles emerging in different parts of the world. I ask you to build the future, to work for a better world. ...Above all, in one way or another, fight for the common good, serve the poor, be protagonists of the revolution of charity and service, capable of resisting the pathologies of consumerism and superficial individualism.

– *Christus Vivit*, 174, Pope Francis (2019)

engaging in a 'racial examination of conscience'

1

- Do I interact with people who are different from me outside of work or school?
- Do I read books or stories written by people of different ethnic or religious heritage than myself?
- Have I taken the time to listen to the voices of others who don't look like me or have a different background and life experience than me?
- If in a supervisor role, have I included people of various cultural or ethnic backgrounds when developing professional guidelines and/or dress codes?
- Have I ever said the following phrases or something similar: “she's pretty for a black girl” or “he'd be handsome if he wasn't so dark” or “that little girl would be cute if her mom did her hair” or other such judgments on beauty and acceptance?
- Have I ever asked someone about their heritage or ethnicity by asking “so, what are you?”?

engaging in a 'racial examination of conscience'

2

- Have I ever seen someone on the street and made a judgement based on how they dress, how their hair is styled, how they walk, how they speak?
- Have I ever participated in or laughed at jokes or comments that belittle or denigrate people who don't look like me or practice a different faith than me?
- Do I blame the victims who suffer poverty and/or oppression for their plight?
- Do I try to come up with excuses for things I do or say that are perceived as racist or harmful by others?
- Do I dismiss the concerns or observations of others as simply being "overly sensitive" or being "PC"?
- Do I ask someone that I am an acquaintance with in social or professional settings to speak for their entire culture?
- Do I use a friend or family member who is of a different background than my own to "prove" that I have said or done nothing wrong?
- Have I ever said "I'm not racist, but..."?

engaging in a 'racial examination of conscience'

3

- Do I always speak to others from different backgrounds with respectful tone and language?
- Do I automatically associate negative attributes to an entire group of people?
- Do I use dehumanizing language about others, referring to people as “thugs, animals, illegals,” etc.?
- Do I categorize other ethnicities into groups like “good” and “troublesome”?
- When trying to show a broad ethnic representation for my community or institution, do I randomly place minorities in advertisements? Do I ask for input on how advertisements may be perceived outside of my own culture?
- Do I take the time to learn and listen to the stories of others’ lives in order to better understand them and the challenges they may face that I do not?
- Do I see Jesus Christ in each and every person I encounter every single time? Do I love each and every person regardless of their heritage, the choices they have made, their status in society, or the perception I may have of them?

Adapted from We Are Salt and Light – USCCB website

<https://www.wearesaltandlight.org/blog/2017/12/28/engaging-in-a-racial-examination-of-conscience>

NFCYM

DISCUSSION

Discuss with the person you came with or next to you in your pew:

1. What challenges me from our discussion today?
2. Who do I need to be in relationship with or need to reach out to so I can better understand how racism and inequality affects others?
3. *Youth:* Reflecting on the examples given, what can I commit to do to address racism and inequality in my own life? In my community?
for Adults: How can I accompany my youth in their efforts to address issues of equity?

MOVING FROM DIALOGUE TO ACTION

WHAT CAN WE DO?

- 1. Repentance**
- 2. Solidarity**
- 3. Presence**
- 4. Formation**
- 5. Prayer**

To fight racism, Catholics must hunger for justice like we do for the Eucharist – from the Editors of America Magazine

<https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2020/06/01/fight-racism-catholics-must-hunger-justice-we-do-eucharist>

QUESTIONS

GET MORE RESOURCES AT:

- <https://nfcym.org/resources/webinars/open-wide-our-hearts/> (webinars)
- <https://nfcym.org/resources/topics/combating-racism/>

If you have questions, feel free to reach out:

- DariusV@nfcym.org
- 202-301-5166

THANK
YOU!



Prayer to Heal Racial Division

We thank you, O Lord,
For in your loving wisdom
You created one human family
With a diversity
That enriches our communities.

We pray to you, O Lord,
That we always recognize
each member of this human family
As being made in your image and beloved
by you, With worth and dignity.

We pray to you, O Lord,
That we may envision a way forward
To heal the racial divisions
That deny human dignity and
the bonds between all human beings.

We pray to you, O Lord
That we may affirm each person's dignity
Through fair access for all
To economic opportunity, housing,
Education, and employment.
We pray to you, O Lord,

That we may have eyes to see
What is possible when we reach out
Beyond fear, beyond anger,
To hold the hand of our sisters, our
brothers.

We thank you, O Lord,
For your call and challenge to us
That we may reveal your teachings and
your love
Through our actions to end racism
And to proclaim that we are all your
children, heirs to your sacred creation.
Amen.

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SERVANT OF GOD,
THEA BOWMAN:
PRAY FOR US.

"Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)"

Amazing grace
How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I'm found
Was blind, but now I see

The Lord has promised good to me
His word my hope secures
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures

'Twas grace that taught my heart
to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace
appear
The hour I first believed

[2x]
My chains are gone
I've been set free
My God, my Savior has ransomed
me
And like a flood His mercy reigns
Unending love, amazing grace

My chains are gone
I've been set free
My God, my Savior has ransomed
me
And like a flood His mercy reigns
Unending love, amazing grace