

A Quick Look at...

THE CATHOLIC RESPONSE TO RACISM

Diocesan Youth Minister Meet-Up Notes from June 2, 9, & 16, 2020

Key Points from Presentation:

Part 1: Foundational Terms:

- **Race:** A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics, particularly color, created by society; not based on biology.
- **Racism:** A complex system of beliefs & behaviors grounded on the presumed superiority of one race. It can be divided into two categories:
 - **Institutional Racism:** The way in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups.
 - **Individual Racism:** The beliefs, attitudes & actions of individuals that support racism; individual racism can occur on a conscious and unconscious level and be both active and passive.

Part 2: Where to Start with the Catholic Lens:

- Remember this is a pro-life issue—it is centered on human dignity.
- When studying racism in America, start with slavery: African people were brought here as other people's property, where other people chose to come here in search of a better life and new possibilities.
- Actively bring Jesus into the conversation and the conversation to Jesus.
- Read the USCCB documents on racism, and get involved with an organization that focuses on human dignity (Catholic Campaign for Human Development, etc.).

Part 3: How to Have a Conversation About Race:

- Create a safe place to have the conversation, acknowledging that this is a hard conversation and it will not be comfortable. Use these guidelines:
 1. Everyone must agree to listen.
 2. Allow others to finish speaking.
 3. Refrain from challenging, giving advice, or criticizing what others say.
 4. Speak from your own personal experience.
 5. Refrain from using friends' experiences or something you read.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

USCCB & Youth Ministry Resources:

- [Open Wide Our Hearts](#), a 2018 USCCB Pastoral Letter
- [All USCCB Educational Resources on Racism](#)
- [At The Table](#), a Life Teen series on Racism

Books:

- [White Fragility](#), by Robin DiAngelo
- [Racial Justice & the Catholic Church](#), by B. Massingale
- [So You Want to Talk About Race](#), by Ijeoma Oulo

Podcasts & Films:

- [A Rosary for Racial Reconciliation](#), by Fr. Josh Johnson
- [Black & Catholic Parts 1 & 2](#), by Pews & Plantains
- [Live with Chika Anyanwu & Ike Ndolo](#), by Ave Explores
- [Just Mercy](#), a movie on racial injustice & death row
- [Eye of the Storm](#), a classroom study on racism
- [I'm a Bit of a Racist, & So Are You](#), by Breaking in the Habit
- [Reconciling the Body of Christ](#), by Ascension Presents

Other:

- [Where Do We Go From Here](#), a Barna Resource
- [Saints Who Fought Racism](#), by Meg Hunter-Kilmer
- [My Black Catholic Church was Closed in the Name of Integration](#), by Deacon Charles Williams

- Q&A about Racism -

1. **Referencing the language around the Black Lives Matter movement, how do we respond to the rhetoric of the campaign as youth ministers? How do we respond to and engage in social media that shows support for the dignity of Black lives?**
We can say "Black lives matter" because they do matter! We care about the lives of these people, they matter and have inherent dignity and worth! We should not get caught up in politics that might surround this phrase, but we can say the phrase because it is true. On social media, do your research as a youth minister before resharing anything, and don't engage in "cancel culture" - this stops a conversation rather than starting one that can lead to a conversion of heart.
2. **If I am part of a predominately white Catholic parish, how can my parish be more welcoming to the Black community?**
Beyond your parish walls, you can have your group visit other Catholic churches so you can see the diversity of our faith, attend regional events, and partner with a parish for social justice event and make a bridge between your communities. Beyond that, hospitality is huge! Say hello to people in the parking lot who don't look familiar, make them feel at home, invite them to sit with your family in the pew. When you have conversations about racism, don't put a Black teen on the spot and expect them to be a spokesperson for the whole Black community—instead, let them come to you in their own time.



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