

INFO ALERT 145

October 30, 2018

*"Let all citizens be mindful of their simultaneous **right and duty** to vote freely in advancing the common good." - Second Vatican Council(1965) "There is both a **right and a duty** for all citizens to vote in a participative political society; it is 'morally obligatory' to exercise the right to vote as an expression of our co-responsibility for the common good." - Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2240*

Focus for 2018 - 2019: Acknowledging and Healing Racism

Education: In pledging ourselves to own and heal our racism, we IHM's resolve to grow in deeper awareness of the presence of racism in ourselves, our congregation, our hurting society.

Racism suppresses voting rights: In Info Alert 144, we identified some of the blatant attacks on people of color in denying them the right to vote (e.g. gerrymandering, suppressing voting rolls, limiting polling places, withholding ID recognition, etc.) How can people of color "vote freely to advance the common good" when they cannot get to the polls, or when their voting credentials are denied? Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Texas, as reported in newspapers over these past few weeks, have plotted to deny the right to vote to hundreds of citizens. Concerned citizens must speak out to lawmakers about this assault on our democracy and about this violation of the dignity of the human person, American citizens, in so many, many states. .

So, as we prepare to vote for the common good on Tuesday, Nov. 6, we recognize the toxic effects of racism and share this critical information with others.

Personal and Congregational Racism: In "*We Cannot Heal That Which We Cannot Name*,"

Sisters P. Chappell and A-L Nadeau, entreat religious women to see how they block their ability to combat racism-both personal and congregational. (Ideas from LCWR, "Occasional Papers," 20-22) "And the truth will set you free."

The authors claim that facing the truth about our racism makes us uncomfortable, embarrassed, angry, overwhelmed, helpless, sometimes paralyzed. We see the ugliness of racism all around us in the U.S., especially this past year. At times, we fear to address this evil lest it tear us apart. Then, we quickly decide that racism is "out there" and not "in here."

Racism hurts all of us, both people of color and white people: The authors suggest that people of color are damaged by internalized racial oppression, that leads them to believe, accept, and live out of negative social definitions of themselves and society, definitions that make them feel not competent nor good enough. In order to heal from this, negative attitudes and behaviors must be acknowledged and changed.

How does racism hurt white people? White people suffer from the internalized racial superiority that we have developed and continue to sustain, e.g., white privilege. Both problems deserve an honest response. Perhaps fear of the other describes, but definitely does not justify our racism. Consider the **actions below**.

Prayer: Good and gracious God, you invite us to recognize and reverence your divine image in our neighbor. Enable us to see the reality of racism and free us to challenge and uproot it from our congregation, ourselves, our society. We beg for both forgiveness and conversion as we open our hearts and minds in prayer. (-Sisters of Mercy)

Action: On a practical level, we might ask:

Do we recognize our tendency, either consciously or unconsciously, to feel superior to people of color?

Do we talk or teach down to people of color? Do we expect less of students of color?

Do we remain silent when people belittle, demean, or mock the speech of people of color?

Do we, as people of color, succumb to feelings of inadequacy when we are working with white people?

Upcoming events: Tuesday, Nov. 6 **VOTE for the common good. ENCOURAGE others to vote.**

Saturday, Nov. 17 (9am to 3pm) St. Gabriel, Philadelphia. Workshop on Social Justice All are welcome!

Sunday, Nov. 11 - Solidarity Vigil at Berks County Residential Center (irene.rivera@villanova.edu)
(More information to come.) **Vote . . .Vote . . .Vote!**