

INFO ALERT 147

December 11, 2018

*In his 1963 Letter from Birmingham Jail, Rev. Martin Luther King wrote: "Over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block is not the White Citizen's Councilor nor the KKKlanner but the **white moderate**, who is more devoted to 'order' than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice. . .who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom."*

**Education: Racism** - At the USCCB meeting in November, the US Bishops issued a letter on the country's original sin of racism, titled "Open Wide Our Hearts," stating that "Racism still profoundly affects our culture, and it has no place in the Christian heart." This pastoral letter against racism initiates an ongoing effort to move the church to recognize its role in that original sin of racism and **the urgent need right now to raise the issue anew**. The bishops write, "Not only does this evil harm its victims, but it corrupts the souls of those who harbor prejudicial or racist thoughts." The bishops' call to action must involve more than personal development and education; it must challenge the community. Yes, racism requires personal conversion, but as a social sin it also demands action in the public square. Today, it has risen as a blatant affront to human dignity, to all that is decent. At the conclusion of their letter, the bishops state unequivocally that **racism is a life issue**. So many attacks on human life have severely affected people of color, who are disproportionately affected by poverty, targeted for abortion, have less access to health care, have the greatest numbers on death row, and are most likely to end their lives when facing serious illness.

The bishops are asking each diocese to plan a strategy to help their people acknowledge personal and communal racism by taking specific action to eradicate this sin and work to heal its effects. In starting this journey, the Phila. Archdiocese is focusing on economic racism, with its first step held on Dec. 6. at St. Charles Seminary. *Go to Catholic Philly.com* to view the list of ongoing sessions and their locations in Jan. and Feb.

**Immigration:** The USCCB recently convened its many organizations (such as JFI, CRS,) dealing with the pro-life issue of immigration, to a national convention in Washington, DC. Suffering severely under this present administration, immigrants and their plight are a deep concern to our church, and, in light of our history, to us IHM's. Some of our sisters attended this meeting as members of the Philadelphia Archdiocesan group.

**Alarm** has been sounded about a "public charge" eligibility requirement proposed by the DHS in October. The public charge has always sought to ensure that arriving legal immigrants and nonimmigrants, as well as those who adjusted their status were economically self-sufficient. This proposed rule will negatively affect many immigrant families. How? It would undermine access to critical public benefits for certain lawful immigrants and their families, damaging their ability to live their lives in dignity thus undermining family unity, family stability. It will present threats to public health and life, affecting U.S. citizens and lawful permanent resident families. This proposed rule is inconsistent with Catholic values of welcoming immigrants, promoting family unity, and valuing human life and dignity. (*JFI website: Justice for Immigrants (acube@usccb.org)*)

**Prayer:** *Mary, friend and mother to all, we ask for your help in obtaining from your Son the grace we need to overcome the evil of racism. We ask that prejudice and animosity will be replaced with a love that respects the dignity of each person. May the Spirit of your Son Jesus warm our hearts. Amen. (USCCB Letter, "Open Wide Our Hearts")*

**Action:** Support our congregation in its work against racism by raising consciousness about skin color privilege and the ways people of diverse backgrounds can unite. Share with those in your ministry, your parish, etc.

*Upcoming events: "Homeless Memorial Day" Thursday, December 20. Project Home asks that we help them to identify the names of homeless Philadelphians who died this year. Submit names to (memorial@projecthome.org) or call Heather Barger at 215-232-7272 ext. 3061.*