

INFO ALERT 151

February 5, 2019

"I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. That is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant." - Dr. M.L. King

Education: CST and Racism

The Moral Judgment of Racism: Consideration of racism is grounded in fundamental scriptural beliefs: equal dignity of **all people**, created in God's image; and Christ's redemption of all. The Catechism of the Catholic Church spells this out: "The equality of men rests essentially on their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it: 'Every form of social or cultural discrimination in fundamental personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, social conditions, color, language, or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design.' " "Any theory or form whatsoever of racism and racial discrimination is morally unacceptable. Racism is not merely one sin among many, it is a radical evil dividing the human family." (#1935)

The Many Faces of Racism: Catholic teaching emphasizes not only the individual conscience, but also the political, legal, and economic structures that sustain racism. Racism is about people and about group behaviors and societal organization. While individual racism includes conscious acts, spontaneous attitudes, the tendency to stereotype and marginalize, indifference, and the triumph of private concern over public responsibility, **laws supporting segregation or apartheid represent blatant systemic racism.** Social, economic, educational, and political advantages from the past are cemented as the often-unconscious privilege of the present (*white privilege, maybe?*) Thus, racism obscures the evils of the past and denies the burdens that history imposes on people of color today. We can be involved in societal racism as **1)** supporters or exploiters of racism, **2)** accessories to this evil through complicity, laziness, or indifference **3)** accessories through fatalistic acceptance (*impossible to change things that have been around for so long*), **4)** accessories through consecration of the status quo, sidestepping the effort and sacrifice required for change and for a new way of relating and living. (*from CST and Racism, Fred Kammer*)

Prayer: Good and gracious God, you invite us to recognize and reverence your divine image and likeness in our neighbor, in the stranger, in the immigrant, in the different one. Enable us to see the reality of racism; free us to challenge and uproot it from our society, our world, ourselves. We place our hopes for racial harmony into Your care. We beg for the grace to act justly in word and deed every day. Amen.

Action: Responses to Racism:

1) Answer the call to conversion to respect the rights, dignity, equality, and sanctity of those racially different from us; 2) Systemically, we must unmask social evil and, like prophets, denounce injustice; 3) We must eradicate overt and covert racism; 4) Adopt a firm, persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; 5) Take an honest look at the past and the present so that everyone's future will be different; 6) Recognize the need for restitution wherever possible through restorative justice. 7) Note the difference between earned strength and **unearned power-conferred privilege** which is simply "permission" to dominate another, either consciously or unconsciously.

Upcoming Events: Chestnut Hill College, the Institute for Forgiveness & Reconciliation, Feb. 6 @ 7 pm
"Racism and White Privilege: Naming Wounds in the Heart of America"

LaSalle University, Discussion of Systemic Causes of the Wealth Gap between White and Black Families
Feb. 6 @ 7 pm (Sponsored by the Phila Archdiocesan Office for Black Catholics in continuing the focus on racism in our church and in our society)