

THE VIOLENCE OF RACISM, Part I

Great harm is produced by racism, which is the degrading of people. We respond and cannot remain silent. Youth hold the key to healing the plague of racism in our society.

The Gospel according to Luke (10) regarding My Neighbor, in Pain:

25 Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" 27 He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." 28 And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." 29 But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' 36 Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" 37 He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Over the centuries, the Parable of the Good Samaritan has been understood through themes such as, 1) God's radical call to a compassion that extends beyond one's own family or tribe to anyone in need, 2) the error of demonizing the "Other," as 1st century Jews did the Samaritans (ironically it was the Samaritan not the Jews who exemplified kindness and generosity in the story), and 3) Christ's salvation of humans. He is the Samaritan; humanity is the person by the side of the road. The inn & its keeper are the Church, entrusted with continuing to improve the health of beaten-up humans. As Christians, we are called not only to be the innkeeper, but also to model ourselves after the Good Samaritan (Jesus Christ). Our Lord deeply cares about every sparrow which falls to the ground (Matt. 10:29). We are called to resemble Christ, the Good Samaritan, who "ran to the afflicted with affection, showing him the utmost care." (St. Gregory of Narek, 10th Century).

THE VIOLENCE OF RACISM, part II

IMPLICIT BIAS

The speaker posits three things:

- Implicit Bias operates at a subconscious level
- Implicit Bias can run contrary to your concept of your stated beliefs
- It is triggered through rapid and automatic mental associations which shape and mold our behavior

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1. Do you think, personally, that you have implicit racial biases? Describe them. If they do indeed exist at “a subconscious level,” how might you control them?
2. Consider your parish. Do you think there are people in your parish who have racial bias? How might this be contrary to our church’s “stated beliefs?”
3. What are your thoughts on the concept of “Black Lives Matter (BLM)?”
4. Do you think the elders of your church would sit and listen to your beliefs on BLM?
5. What effect does the post-traumatic stress of the Genocide have on our attitudes towards social justice issues facing *other* ethnic groups?

Discussion Questions

1. Who was your first African American or Hispanic teacher?
2. If you are not a person of color, Say a bit about your friends of color.
3. What racism or inequality do you see in the world you live in, in your school or in the news?
4. The lawyer asked, “Who is my neighbor?” How would *you* answer?
5. In the parable, the Levite and priest hesitated to help (because of Jewish laws of cleanliness). Have you ever seen a person (any color) treated badly and you hesitated to help? How did you feel?
6. Read Amos 5:21-24. In your own words, what is the prophet suggesting about faith, piety, and social justice? When you see someone being treated unfairly, what is your responsibility?
7. Read Genesis 1:27 and Galatians 3:28. What information do these verses provide that counter racism?
8. Are there clubs in your school that foster action or deal with racism or just getting people together to understand each other? What “service” groups do you have in your school?
9. Do you feel up for the challenge? Don’t be afraid. Read Hebrews 12:14. We are all called to the holiness that comes from peaceful relationships with others.
10. Finally, what does Christ demand of us in verse 37?