

Rosary Across the Diocese

Sorrowful Mysteries

“What is needed, and what we are calling for, is a genuine conversion of heart, a conversion that will compel change, and the reform of our institutions and society.” (Open Wide Our Hearts the enduring call to love *a pastoral letter against racism*) USCCB 2018

1. Agony in the Garden (Contrition for Sin)

“The teaching of the Roman Catholic Church on racism is clear. Racism is morally wrong. To persist obstinately in this stance is **unchristian**...Let us then make it clear again. To hold that one race is inherently superior to another is a serious sin. To persist obstinately in this stance is incompatible with God’s original creation and our redemption in Christ Jesus” ***-Racial Harmony: A Statement of the Catholic Bishops of Louisiana 1988***

As we contemplate the Agony in the Garden, we acknowledge our personal role in the sin of racism, whether through word or deed, action or failure to act. We remember those times where we injured the Body of Christ through the sin of racism. We pray for truly contrite hearts, hearts that are ready to actively eradicate this sin in our midst.

2. Scourging at the Pillar (Purity)

“If we are to remove the sin and crime of racism from our midst, we must start with the self. All social sin begins in the choices of individuals to be unjust and is sustained by our blindness to those initial choices. As Saint John says, ‘If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves.’ We can say the same thing about prejudices: We all have them, though we may never have faced them honestly.” ***-Racism: A Tarnished Reflection of Ourselves, 1997 Pastoral Letter of Most Rev. James A. Griffin, currently Bishop Emeritus of Columbus Ohio***

As we contemplate the Scourging, we pray for humble consciences that recognize our own personal sin of racism and we seek pure hearts and open minds that are restored to see the unquestionable and inherent dignity in all mankind, regardless of race or color.

3. Crowning with Thorns (Moral Courage)

“The theological virtue of hope is not the same as wishing for the impossible. Christian hope stirs up in us the desire that God’s kingdom [will] come, here and in eternity. We place our trust in the promises of Christ and rely on his grace rather than on our own strength.

It would be naive to think that racism will disappear overnight; it is too deeply embedded in the American experience. But change will come if we remain constant and never lose sight of the goal. The goal is visible when we see with the eyes of Christ, for our hope of ultimate victory is the Lord who desires that we be one in him.

As the bishops of the Catholic Church in Illinois, we commit ourselves to speak the truth about racism. We commit ourselves to encouraging dialogue between African Americans and other Americans. We

commit ourselves to model in our dioceses a future without racism. Confident in the Lord, we invite all Catholics in Illinois, and all men and women of good will, to join us in the struggle against racism so that, one day, we may all be free.

The springtime for the Gospel which Pope John Paul II prays will mark the new millennium [and] will be a time free of the sin of racism. The time is now; let the place be our dioceses and our state." ***-Moving Beyond Racism: Learning to See with the Eyes of Christ, 2000, Catholic Bishops of Illinois***

As we contemplate our role in racism, we pray for the moral courage, the fortitude, the spiritual and mental strength to work toward the end of racism in our personal and family life, in our workplace, and in our society.

4. Carrying of the Cross (Patience)

"The effort to overcome racism does in fact seem to have become an imperative which is broadly anchored in human consciences." The Church's doctrine affirms it with no less vigor all racist theories are contrary to Christian faith and love. And yet, in sharp contrast to this growing awareness of human dignity, racism still exists and continually reappears in different forms. It is a wound in humanity's side that mysteriously remains open. **Everyone, therefore, must make efforts to heal it with great firmness and patience**...Respect for every person and every race is respect for basic rights, dignity and fundamental equality. This does not mean erasing cultural differences. Instead it is important to educate to a positive appreciation of the complementary diversity of peoples...Racism and racist acts must be condemned" ***-The Church and Racism: Toward A More Fraternal Society, Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace***

As we contemplate the immense patience of Our Lord in the Carrying of the Cross, let us pray for the patience to work on our own prejudice as well as the strength and fervor to continue the work of building a society where every person truly is our brother or sister.

5. Crucifixion (Salvation)

"As St. Paul told the Athenians: "From one single stock he...created the whole human race so that they could occupy the entire earth," and so everyone can say with the poet that they are of God's same "race." The choice of the Jewish people does not contradict this universalism. It was a divine pedagogy which wanted to assure the preservation and development of faith in the Eternal, who is unique, thus giving a basis to the ensuing responsibilities. If the people of Israel were aware of a special bond with God, they also affirmed that there was a Covenant of the entire human race with him and that, also in the Covenant made with them, all peoples are called to salvation: "All the tribes of the earth shall bless themselves by you," God told Abraham..." ***-The Church and Racism: Toward A More Fraternal Society, Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace***

As we contemplate the Crucifixion of our blessed Lord, we remember the salvation offered through one who suffered so much. We pray that our nation may experience salvation from racism. We pray especially that those entrusted or ordained with a ministry of the Church be aware that their sacred mission is to evangelize and present the salvation offered by Christ to all Peoples, to all races, to all mankind!