

## **An email from Vincent sent 6/4/2020:**

So...no better way to start off my day but in tears.

It brought back a lot of memories of racism that I have personally been experiencing since I was a child.

Darker black Americans are treated harsher. It is a fact. I'm not making this up.

When I was young I was hit across the temple with a broom handle and called the N word. It was back in the day when the broom handles were thick. I made my way home and I never saw my dad drive so fast to get me to the hospital. They kept me for observation and the side of my face swelled up. The very next day my dad bought a gun. I'm so happy he never had to use it.

I remember being so excited about getting my learners permit so I could learn to drive. Instead of showing me the gas pedal, brake pedal, etc., my dad thought me to keep my car registration and insurance registration above the sun visor of the drivers side and my wallet in plain sight. When (not if) I was stopped I was to keep my hands at 10 & 2 (clock) and ask for permission before I made any moves. To this day I follow that rule.

I remember when I first moved to California. My dad had picked out and AWESOME car for me. A Camaro Z28 with tee tops. I was told when I moved here to stay away from Wilshire and La Cienega (the beginning of Beverly Hills) because I would be stopped. Well...it was true. I found myself at that intersection and I was pulled over, removed from my car and it was searched.

In 2014 Cindy and I were driving home from Fr. Jim's dad's funeral in Filmore. We were on the 23 heading back to St. Jude's. There was a police car going in the opposite direction. I told Cindy he was going to turn around and follow us. I think she was truly shocked when it happened just as I said it would. I just said something to the affect of welcome to my life.

Racism goes far beyond the black community. The LGBTQ community equally struggles with equality as well as other races of color. Each ones struggle is a little different but the goal is the same. Not to be judged by the color of our skin or our gender orientation. Let us not forget the Transgender women who have been killed for no other reason than being transgender. Let us not forget Matthew Shepherd who was tied to a fence and left for dead just for being gay. These people have parents who are devastated over the loss of their children.

Some people think we are asking for more than what we really are asking for. We are not asking to be treated better than any one else, we are simply asking for equality.

I have list of experiences that I could go on about but I choose not to because they are difficult and buried deep.

One thing I can truly say that is when I'm with my community (St. Jude's) I don't feel judged by the color of my skin. Yes there are those who do but I have to put them behind me so I simply brush them off. Fr. Bill actually told me about a family that was upset that I was in a leadership role. He told then if they didn't like it they could find another parish.

To my friends who serve and have served on the police force. NOBODY thinks all police are bad. Racist people are in many professions and come in all colors. Please know that you are admired and celebrated because you put yourselves in harm's way. Thank you for service. Putting yourself in harms way couldn't be easy on you or your families. I was truly moved when police officers put down their arms and joined the protest. To me this deescalated the violence and returned it to a peaceful protest.

What you saw on TV started at peaceful protest. It was like all of a sudden a busload of HATE arrived on the scene and overshadowed the peaceful protest.

It felt a since of encouragement to see that it was a multicultural protest.

I live about 2 city blocks away from the demonstration/devastation. The helicopters and police sirens were around for hours. When I heard gun shots we went into the house and stayed in the back. I do not condone the acts of violence against innocent victims. Some of the businesses that were hanging on by a thread because of the shutdowns from COVID-19 will probably never open after these recent events. Businesses are boarding up their windows now before closing.

I can't bring myself to watch the news. My roommate (who is also black) was sobbing. That was enough for me.

Remember these are elected officials. You can vote them in and you can vote them out. We need to continue to raise awareness and to vote.

I personally believe in term limits.

As Pope Francis said, "My friends, we cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life. At the same time, we have to recognize that the violence of recent nights is self-destructive and self-defeating. Nothing is gained by violence and so much is lost."

God created one race, the HUMAN race. ALL LIVES MATTER!

I wanted to especially reach out to those who feel that they really don't know anyone who has and is still is dealing with these issues so it really doesn't affect them...now you know someone.

It is not in my nature to put parts of my life out there and this will probably be the only time I do.

If you have questions I will be happy to respond.

Peace,

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