

SALT & LIGHT

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OPEN WIDE OUR HEARTS

Last week, the U.S. Catholic Bishops released their new pastoral letter against racism, *Open Wide Our Hearts; the Enduring Call to Love*. It's a challenging document calling all of us to commit to bringing to an end the sin of racism which has plagued our nation from its origins. Too many people will not recognize in themselves the need for the conversion that the bishops call for, but the bishops adopt Pope Francis' words, "let no one 'think that this invitation is not meant for him or her.'" (Evangelii Gaudium) **All of us are in need of personal, ongoing conversion.** The bishops call us to conversion and the courage to be honest with ourselves. You can find the letter and a wide variety of educational and pastoral resources at <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/index.cfm>. Please note that some of the resources are meant for the first Sunday of Advent.

Why racism and why now? In a recent press release Bishop Shelton J. Fabre, of Houma-Thibodaux, Chairman of U.S. Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism explained, "The entire body of bishops felt the need to address the topic of racism, once again, after witnessing the deterioration of the public discourse, and episodes of violence and animosity with racial and xenophobic overtones, that have re-emerged in American society in the last few years. ...at key moments in history the bishops have come together for important pronouncements...to the problems of our time. This is such a time."

Most of the early Europeans who came to this country were committed Christians, a religion whose law is summarized by love of God and neighbor. Yet those Europeans were able to justify the near-extirpation of the indigenous people of the land and the cruel importation of people from Africa as chattel slaves—humans to be owned by other humans. The belief that these native people and imported Africans were somehow less human than the Europeans fostered a system that corrupted the Christianity of the dominant culture, created an enduring myth to support dominance that still influences our thinking today, and subjected people of color to cruel policies that continue to have an impact.

"Racism shares in the same evil that moved Cain to kill his brother. It arises from suppressing the truth that his

brother Abel was also created in the image of God, a human equal to himself. Every racist act—every such comment, every joke, every disparaging look as a reaction to the color of skin, ethnicity, or place of origin—is a failure to acknowledge another person as a brother or a sister, created in the image of God."

The bishops don't give any of us a pass, recognizing that racism comes in blatant, bold forms including hate crimes and racial profiling, but also sins of omission that allow racism to continue to exist when "individuals, communities, and even churches remain silent and fail to act against racial injustice when it is encountered.... The cumulative effects of personal sins of racism have led to social structures of injustice and violence that makes us all accomplices in racism."

"Racism arises when—either consciously or unconsciously—a person holds that his or her own race or ethnicity is superior, and therefore judges persons of other races or ethnicities as inferior and unworthy of equal regard. When this conviction or attitude leads individuals or groups to exclude, ridicule, mistreat, or unjustly discriminate against persons on the basis of their race or ethnicity, it is sinful. Racist acts are sinful because they violate justice. They reveal a failure to acknowledge the human dignity of the persons offended, to recognize them as the neighbors Christ calls us to love."

Mary, friend and mother to all,
through your Son, God has found a way
to unite himself to every human being,
called to be one people,
sisters and brothers to each other.

We ask for your help in calling on your Son,
seeking forgiveness for the times when
we have failed to love and respect one another.

We ask for your help in obtaining from your Son
the grace we need to overcome the evil of racism
and to build a just society.

We ask for your help in following your Son,
so that prejudice and animosity
will no longer infect our minds or hearts
but will be replaced with a love that respects
the dignity of each person.

Mother of the Church, the Spirit of your Son Jesus
warms our hearts: pray for us.

FUN VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

From Catholic Family Center:

Our micro enterprise, Healthy Sisters Soup and Bean works is in great need of volunteers to help pack soups for the holiday season. The program serves women in recovery and they desperately need volunteer support between now and Christmas to meet demand. We would like volunteers to serve in three hour blocks between 8 and 3 PM during the work week from now until right before Christmas. They can do this one time or as often as they would like.

The minimum age is 16 with an accompanying adult. The location is 500 Lee Rd, Rochester NY 14606. Program contacts are Ken Zabloutny and Kathy Previte. They can be reached at 546-2784 during the hours above or at kzabloutny@cfcrochester.org or kprevite@cfcrochester.org. This is an excellent volunteer opportunity for families, especially when teens need community service hours.

ALTERNATIVE FAIR

You can enjoy Family Holiday Shopping with a conscience at Metro Justice's 36th annual Alternative Fair, featuring thousands of unique fair trade, earth friendly, and locally produced goods that support a strong local economy and a just and sustainable world. -Friday, Nov. 30, 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm and Saturday, Dec. 1, 10:00 am until 4:00 pm. This is holiday shopping at prices the whole family can afford, and for many families, it's their #1 shopping destination each year. Sale items include pottery, textiles, jewelry, fine art, toys & games, ornaments, and much more — all fair trade imports or hand crafted by local artists. There is a suggested donation of \$3 for all those over age 12, and free child care for children 8 and under is available. Bring the whole family for several hours, and enjoy the festive atmosphere as you shop with a conscience. Food will be available.

ASYLUM RESTRICTIONS

From Justice for Immigrants, Regarding Deep Concern About Asylum Access Restrictions:

On November 9, 2018, President Trump issued a [proclamation](#) restricting asylum eligibility for those who enter the U.S. through the Southern Border without authorization in between the official Ports of Entry. The Department of Justice and Department of Homeland Security issued a corresponding "[interim final rule](#)" that seeks to implement this proclamation. In response, Bishop Joe S. Vásquez, of Austin, Texas, Chairman of the U.S Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Migration, Sister Donna Markham, OP, Phd, President and CEO of Catholic Charities USA,

Jeanne Atkinson, Executive Director of Catholic Legal Immigration Network, and Sean Callahan, President and CEO of Catholic Relief Services issued a [statement](#) reiterating that it is not a crime to seek asylum and urging the Administration to seek other solutions that will strengthen the integrity of the existing immigration system. You can also read our new resource, [Migrant Caravan: How You Can Learn More and Act In the U.S.](#), to learn more about the families fleeing Central America and currently traveling through Mexico and ways you can assist.

SUSTAINABLE HOMES

If you live in an older home in the City of Rochester and want to make it as energy efficient and conserve energy, lower your heating bills, and do something about Climate Change, check out the City's [SUSTAINABLE HOMES ROCHESTER](#) (<http://www.cityofrochester.gov/article.aspx?id=21474839140>). "Sustainable Homes Rochester is a community campaign designed to encourage residents to install clean heating and cooling technologies and improve home energy efficiency.

SIMPLE LIVING CHRISTMAS

From the Catholic Climate Covenant:

How do our daily choices contribute to climate change? What are the attitudes and behaviors that need examination? Do you ever wish that we could live more simply and sustainably? How can Catholics live more faithfully in a consumer-driven society? Are there ways to celebrate Christmas in a more meaningful and spiritual way?

To find answers to these questions, join us for a one-hour webinar, "[Living Simply-Living Faithfully](#)" on Wednesday, November 28th, 2:00-3:00 pm eastern. (<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6564098006776388619?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=58a62bff-22f5-4f66-98d6-bb013132bc15>)

"Let us ask for the grace to hear the cry of all those tossed by the waves of life. The cry of the poor: it is the stifled cry of the unborn, of starving children, of young people more used to the explosion of bombs than happy shouts of the playground. It is the cry of the elderly, cast off and abandoned to themselves. It is the cry of all those who face the storms of life without the presence of a friend. It is the cry of all those forced to flee their homes and native land for an uncertain future.... It is the cry of every Lazarus who weeps while the wealthy few feast on what, in justice, belongs to all. Injustice is the perverse root of poverty. The cry of the poor daily grows louder but is heard less and less.... drowned out by the din of the rich few, who grow ever fewer and more rich."

Pope Francis, (World Day of the Poor Homily 2018)