

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

Embracing our Diversity as Children of God

One of the beautiful things about God's creation is the diversity of people throughout the world. He has endowed us all with unique gifts, abilities, and practices that somehow reflect His image and likeness and yet those differences can become a cause for disunity, separation, and even hatred.

During these past months, we have seen acts of violence against people of color, and subsequent protests, both peaceful and violent, ongoing unrest, and a call for change to something greater.

In these days, we are being called to self-reflection, dialogue with one another, and reclaiming the belief that starting with our own action of loving God and loving our neighbor, is the path forward. While it can be a challenge to see God in the midst of the suffering and discord, we know He is at work, and we can begin by asking Him to help us embrace and live our true identity as beloved children of God.

Gather:

Wake me up Lord, so that the evil of racism finds no home within me. Keep watch over my heart Lord, and remove from me any barriers to your grace, that may oppress and offend my brothers and sisters. Fill my spirit Lord, so that I may give services of justice and peace. Clear my mind Lord, and use it for your glory. And finally, remind us Lord, that you said, "blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God." Amen.
*see worship aid in "Go Deeper"

1. When and how have you acted as a peacemaker?"

Luke 10:25-37

25 There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" **26** Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" **27** He said in reply, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." **28** He replied to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live." **29** But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" **30** Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. **31** A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him,

Watch:

Paulina Gonzales shares how her faith integrates into dialoguing about racial justice and the call to love our neighbor



Discuss:

1. Have you felt called to do something that you didn't want to do? What was it and how did you know it was the right thing to do?
2. In the video, Paulina mentions we are all called to different ways to put our faith in action. In what ways have you put your faith in action over these past months?
3. In addressing all forms of social injustice, and in particular racism, we are invited to prayer, education, and action. Which of these seems easiest for you? Which is the most difficult?



he passed by on the opposite side. **32** Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. **33** But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. **34** He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. **35** The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.' **36** Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?" **37** He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Explore:

1. What does it mean to you to love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, all your being, all your strength, and all your mind? Which of these seems the most challenging to you?
2. Have you ever been "moved to compassion" to help another? What did you do and how did it make you feel?
3. To embrace the command of Jesus to "go and do likewise," how can you treat others—close friends and relatives as well as strangers—with mercy?

You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.

Luke 10:27

Weekly Challenge:

Do one or more of the following:

- Reflect on and memorize Luke 10:27.
- Pray for the openness to recognize all you meet as your neighbor and treat them with the dignity of a child of God.

Prayer:

God of Heaven and Earth, you created the one human family and endowed each person with great dignity. Aid us, we pray, in overcoming the sin of racism. Grant us your grace in eliminating this blight from our hearts, our communities, our social and civil institutions. Fill our hearts with love for you and our neighbor so that we may work with you in healing our land from racial injustice. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. *see worship aid in "Go Deeper"

Love Your Neighbor (session 5)

Go Deeper:

Additional Bible passages about loving your neighbor:

- 1 Corinthians 12:12-25
- Exodus 20:1-17
- Matthew 22:36-40
- Romans 12:9-21
- Ephesians 4:32-5:8

Videos, Prayers, Articles, Books, etc.:

- Presentation: "[Courageous Conversations](#)" by Deacon Chris
- Video: "[Justice](#)" from the Bible project
- Video: "[Leaning into What we Fear](#)" by Jeremy Courtney
- Resources: from the [USCCB](#) Ad Hoc Committee on Racism
- "Prayer Service for Racial Healing" [recording](#) and [*worship aid](#)
- Video Homily: Deacon Chris on "[Love Your Neighbor](#)"
- Video: "[Purl!](#)" by Pixar Sparkshorts
- Prayer: "[Combat Racism through Peace of Christ](#)"
- Article: "[A Conversation about Race with Damon Clarke Owens](#)" by Deacon Steven D. Greydanus

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