

A Radical Evil

“Racism is not merely one sin among many; it is a radical evil that divides the human family and denies the new creation of a redeemed world. To struggle against it demands an equally radical transformation, in our own minds and hearts as well as in the structure of our society.”

-Brothers and Sisters to Us, U.S. Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter on Racism, 1979

Racism is not only using a demeaning slur or telling a joke based on nasty stereotypes.

Racism is also a system that denies people their dignity, like this:

In our era it looks like this:

A 2015 Washington Post's [analysis](#) showed that “black men were **seven times** more likely than white men to die by police gunfire while **unarmed**.”

“...no matter what else is going on in America, year in and year out for the last 60 years, **Black unemployment** is always about **twice as high** as **white unemployment**. And even if you just look at Black college graduates, they're still almost twice as likely to be unemployed as white college graduates. And if you just apply for a job with a white sounding name, you're **50% more likely to get a callback** than with a Black sounding name.”

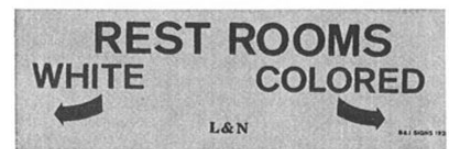
<https://www.raceforward.org/videos/systemic-racism>

“...in 2010 Black Americans made up **13%** of the population but had only **2.7%** of the country's wealth.”

The median net worth for a **white** family was **\$134,000**, but the median net worth for a **Hispanic** family was **\$14,000**, and for a **Black** family it was **\$11,000**.”

“African Americans represent **12%** of the total population of drug users, but **38%** of **those arrested** for drug offenses, and **59%** of **those in state prison** for a drug offense.”

“Black children in the U.S. were almost **four times as likely** as white or Asian children to be **living in poverty** in 2013, and significantly more likely than Hispanic children.”



It's called structural racism. And it's a sin.

“The structures of our society are subtly racist, for these structures reflect the values which society upholds. They are geared to the success of the majority and the failure of the minority. Members of both groups give unwitting approval by accepting things as they are. Perhaps no single individual is to blame. The sinfulness is often anonymous but nonetheless real. **The sin is social in nature in that each of us, in varying degrees, is responsible. All of us in some measure are accomplices.**”

-Brothers and Sisters to Us



“Recent events in communities across the country, academic research and reports, and the caustic rhetoric that marks conversations about refugees and migrants, all provide ample evidence that there is still much work to do. As Christians, we are called to constantly examine our own hearts and consciences for how we might contribute to or break down racial divisions, intolerance, and discrimination.

The increasing need for healing, that comes from a **fuller understanding** and acknowledgement of the lived reality of people and communities of color, cannot be understated. Lost lives need to be mourned; traumatized families and broken communities need to be healed. And **this is an issue that concerns everyone**, because the lives and dignity of children, as well as the health of communities, depend on it.”

Racism: Confronting the Poison in Our Common Home, Dpt. of Justice, Peace, and Human Development, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, January 2016

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT RACISM?

Taken from: “9 Things You Can Do to Help End Racism”, by Nicki Lisa Cole

- ◆ Listen to, validate, and ally with people who report personal and systemic racism.
- ◆ Have hard conversations with yourself about the racism that lives within you.
- ◆ Have courageous conversations with others when you hear or see racism, whether explicit or implicit.
- ◆ Cross the racial divide (and others) by offering friendly greetings to people, regardless of race, gender, age, sexuality, ability, or class.
- ◆ Participate in anti-racist community events. For example: Support voter registration and polling in neighborhoods where people of color live, because they have historically been marginalized from the political process; Donate time and/or money to community organizations that serve youth of color; Mentor white kids on being anti-racist citizens who stand up for justice.
- ◆ Advocate for national-level anti-racist policies in law enforcement, education and the court system.
- ◆ Vote for candidates who make ending racism a priority.

Now and At the Hour of Our Death...

Our Diocesan Public Policy Committee has chosen Physician Assisted Suicide (PAS) as one of our focus issues. Justice, Peace & Life continues to raise awareness on the many reasons to oppose legislation to legalize PAS in New York.



Racial bias in access to health care is yet another one of those reasons. Research by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services shows that Blacks and Latinos have significantly worse access to care than Whites.

Georgetown law professor Patricia King, in discussing inequalities and assisted suicide, writes that “disabled people, low-income Americans, and racial minorities fear being viewed as “throwaway people” within the healthcare system—less valued in society and often not treated with respect and dignity. They fear coercion, stigmatization and discrimination, understandably believing that the societal indifference prevalent throughout their lives will also infect their end-of-life care.”

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