

## Prayers and Reflections

### OPENING PRAYER

Good and gracious God  
 who loves and delights in all people,  
 we stand in awe before You,  
 knowing that the spark of life  
 within each person on earth  
 is the spark of your divine life.  
 Differences among cultures and races  
 are multicolored manifestations of Your light.  
 May our hearts and minds be open  
 to celebrate similarities and differences  
 among our sisters and brothers.  
 We place our hopes for racial harmony in You,  
 our loving God.  
 Amen.

Adapted from Joseph Stoutzenberger, *Justice & Peace*, Dubuque,  
 Iowa: Brown-ROA, 2000.

### REFLECTION

Human creation by God “in God’s own image” confers  
 upon every human person an eminent dignity; it also  
 postulates the fundamental equality of all human  
 beings. For the Church, this equality, which is rooted in  
 being, acquires the dimension of an altogether special  
 brotherhood and sisterhood through the Incarnation of  
 the Son of God . . . In the Redemption effected by  
 Jesus Christ the Church sees a further basis of the  
 rights and duties of the human person. Hence every  
 form of discrimination based on race . . . is absolutely  
 unacceptable.

Pope John Paul II to the UN Special Committee against Apartheid,  
 July 7, 1984.

We are heirs of a religious teaching which proclaims that  
 all men and women, as children of God, are brothers and  
 sisters. Every form of discrimination against individuals  
 and groups—whether because of race, ethnicity, religion,  
 gender, economic status, or national or cultural origin—is a  
 serious injustice which has severely weakened our social  
 fabric and deprived our country of the unique contributions  
 of many of our citizens.

*Brothers and Sisters to Us*, U.S. Bishops’ Pastoral Letter on Racism in  
 Our Day, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, January 1979.

### CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, Jesus Christ,  
 who reached across the ethnic boundaries  
 between Samaritan, Roman and Jew,  
 who offered fresh sight to the blind  
 and freedom to captives,  
 help us to break down the barriers in our community,  
 enable us to see the reality of racism and bigotry,  
 and free us to challenge and uproot it  
 from ourselves, our society, and the world.  
 Amen.

## Activities

Please note, these activities are designed to:

- Help group participants understand racism and ethnic discrimination.
- Help group participants evaluate their own beliefs, values, and actions in terms of racism and discrimination.
- Help group participants begin to take positive actions to promote diversity, peace, and justice for members of all racial and ethnic groups.

While you may pick and choose among the activities, please try to promote all three objectives if possible.

1. a. Duplicate the “What is Racism” sheets with the concepts and the definitions; distribute to your group or class. Have the participants match the concept with the definition, either working alone or in small groups. When everyone is finished, discuss what points in the definitions the group found most interesting, and/or which ones offered them new perspectives on racism.

b. Go over the True/False questions and answers with your group. Discuss the U.S. Bishops’ and the Pope’s concern with racism: how does racism deny the human dignity of people (a primary concern of Catholic Social Teaching)? Were any people in your group or class surprised that the Church considers racism a sin: why, why not? Why are the problems of racism still “invisible” to many people?

c. Read the case studies of Racism in the U.S. and Racism Around the World and discuss the questions.

2. a. Duplicate and distribute the “Attitudes Towards Differences” sheet. In small groups, ask the group members to go through the attitudes, identifying when they have observed these attitudes—in themselves, in others, in the media, in films, on TV. Then discuss what causes these attitudes, in ourselves and in others.

b. Look over the “What is Privilege?” sheet. Either with the entire group or in small groups, read the statements one by one; ask people to write down a brief statement in addition to agreeing or disagreeing. When all the statements are read, ask if participants have been very aware

of their privileges—or lack of privileges—before this exercise. Why or why not? What can we learn from this exercise about the challenge of granting every human being her/his inherent dignity as a child of God and member of the human community?

c. Duplicate and distribute “What is Your Diversity Quotient?” Have your group members or class do this individually or in small groups and compute their scores. Discuss responses to participants’ scores: if we as Catholics are called to promote the dignity of all people, how successful have we been as individuals and as groups (parish, school, and/or community group)?

d. In small groups or with your entire group, have participants discuss the questions on the “Uncovering Racism-Reflection and Discussion” sheet. (If the discussion occurs in small groups, have them report back some of the central issues that came up in each group.)

3. a. First go over the “Actively Promoting Diversity: Becoming an Ally” sheet. Then go over the “Action on Racism Continuum” sheet with your group. Ask the group to brainstorm ways to move oneself and/or others from one point to another along the continuum—are the suggestions on “Becoming an Ally” helpful at certain stages? What kind of support will be necessary to move through the stages, and where can this support be found? Go through the entire continuum.

b. Ask everyone to spend some time reflecting on what they have learned about themselves in relation to racism and discrimination and where they are on the continuum; have them write down three things they will commit to do to become more aware and active in promoting the dignity of people who suffer discrimination and the effects of discrimination.

4. Read “We Have a Dream;” give time for people to reflect on the article. Discuss specific ways in which we can heal our local, national and international community from the wounds of racism and exclusion and emphasize respect for everyone.

How can we pay more attention to our responses and our language in order to acknowledge and transform fear and disrespect in ourselves?

## Activities (continued)

How can we reach out beyond our level of comfort and our “safety zone” to meet and learn about others, hear their stories (in person or in other ways) and be open to their full humanity?

What kind of projects can we identify that bring together different individuals, schools, parishes, small groups and/or communities to work together on an issue or a problem?

What questions can we begin to ask and how can we examine the policies of our local, national and international community to make sure they do not discriminate

against minorities and others that have not enjoyed full citizenship in some way? (For more information, check out the web sites of USCCB at <http://www.usccb.org>, the Center of Concern at <http://www.coc.org>, or NETWORK at <http://www.networklobby.org>.)

How can we bring diversity and respect for others into our prayers, our worship celebrations and our holy days and holidays?

## Interactive Activity

### WHAT IS RACISM? MATCHING EXERCISE

#### DIRECTIONS

Match each concept with one of the definitions found on the following pages.

- |                                     |                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Discrimination _____             | 11. Institutions _____              |
| 2. Race _____                       | 12. Institutional Racism _____      |
| 3. Ethnicity _____                  | 13. Privilege _____                 |
| 4. Racial and Ethnic Identity _____ | 14. Collusion _____                 |
| 5. Racism _____                     | 15. Horizontal Racism _____         |
| 6. Individual Racism _____          | 16. Internalized Racism _____       |
| 7. Active Racism _____              | 17. Ally _____                      |
| 8. Passive Racism _____             | 18. Empowered Person of Color _____ |
| 9. Culture _____                    | 19. Racism as Sin _____             |
| 10. Cultural Racism _____           |                                     |

## Interactive Activity (continued)

### WHAT IS RACISM? MATCHING EXERCISE

(A) Beliefs, attitudes, and actions that allow racism to exist without openly supporting it. The conscious and unconscious maintenance of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that support the system of racism, racial prejudice, and racial dominance.

(B) Social networks that control the distribution of resources to individuals and social groups and that set and influence cultural norms and values. Examples include the legal and criminal justice system, various forms of media, banks, schools, and organizations that control access to, or the quality of, employment and education. In addition, since religious groups, family units, governmental bodies, and civic organizations influence social norms, policies, and practices, these agencies can also be included.

(C) The benefits which Whites receive by virtue of their skin color. Examples include the ability to be unaware of race, the ability to live and work among people of the same racial group as their own, the security of not being pulled over by the police for being a suspicious person, the expectation that they speak for themselves and not for their entire race, the ability to have a job hire or promotion attributed to their skills and background and not affirmative action.

(D) A person who actively works to eliminate racism. This person may be motivated by self-interest in ending racism, a sense of moral obligation, or a commitment to foster social justice as opposed to a patronizing agenda of “wanting to help those poor people.”

(E) The distribution of goods, resources, and services which favors some groups over others.

(F) The subordination of an individual because of her or his race.

(G) Anything which communicates values in a society, such as what is considered good and desirable, right and wrong, normal, different, appropriate, or attractive. The means through which society creates a context from which individuals derive meaning and prescriptions for

successful living within that culture (language and speech patterns, orientation toward time, standards of beauty, holidays that are celebrated, images of a “normal” family).

(H) “Harboring racist thoughts and entertaining racist attitudes is a sin against the specific message of Christ for whom one’s “neighbor” is not only a person from my tribe, my milieu, my religion or my nation: it is every person that I meet along the way.”

*The Church and Racism: Towards a More Fraternal Society*, Pontifical Commission of Justice and Peace, 1998.

(I) A person who has an understanding of racism and its impact on life without responding to the events and circumstances as a victim. This person has the capacity to work with individuals and institutions with an expectation of positive social change.

(J) The institutional systems that create advantages and benefits for Whites, and discrimination, oppression, and disadvantage for people from targeted racial groups. The advantages created for Whites are often invisible to them, or are considered “rights” available to everyone as opposed to “privileges” awarded to only some individuals and groups.

(K) Thinking and acting in ways which support the systems of racism. People can actively do this by joining groups which advocate ethnic supremacy. People can also do this by telling racist jokes, discriminating against another person, or remaining silent when observing a racist incident or remark.

(L) A label used to divide people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic, and political needs of a society at a given period of time.

(M) Aspects of culture which attribute value and normality to white people, and devalue, stereotype, and label People of Color as “other,” different, less than, or render them invisible. Examples of these norms include defining white skin tones as nude or flesh colored, emphasizing individualism as opposed to a more collective ideology, and identifying mainly Whites as the great writers, composers, artists, etc.

(N) The beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individual people that support racism. This can occur at both an unconscious and conscious level, and can be both active and passive. Examples include telling a racist joke, acting like only White culture or appearance is “normal,” or considering the presence of People of Color a “problem.”

(O) When People of Color accept racist stereotypes about themselves and members of their own racial group. Examples include Blacks using creams to lighten their skin, Latinos believing that the most competent administrators or leaders are white, Native Americans feeling that they cannot be as intelligent as Whites, Asians believing that racism is the result of People of Color not being able to raise themselves “by their own bootstraps.”

(P) A label which divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history and ancestral geographical base. Examples of this include: Cape Verdean, Haitian, African American (Black); Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese (Asian); Cherokee, Mohawk, Navajo (Native American); Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican (Latino); Polish, Irish, and French (White).

(Q) Anything which does not try to hide its racist nature. People who participate in this form of racism advocate the continued subjugation of members of the targeted groups and protection of “the rights” of members of the agent group. These goals are often supported by a belief in the inferiority of People of Color and the superiority of White people, culture, and values.

(R) An individual’s awareness and experience of being a member of a racial and ethnic group. The racial and ethnic categories that an individual chooses to describe himself or herself based on factors like biological heritage, physical appearance, and personal experience.

(S) When minorities accept racist stereotypes about either their own racial group (an Asian person telling another Asian wearing a sari to “dress like an American”; a Latino telling another Latino to stop speaking Spanish) or other racial groups (Latinos believing stereotypes about Native Americans; Blacks not wanting Asians to move into a predominantly Black neighborhood).

## Interactive Activity

### WHAT IS RACISM? MATCHING ANSWERS

- |                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Discrimination: (E)             | 10. Cultural Racism: (M)           |
| 2. Race: (L)                       | 11. Institutions: (B)              |
| 3. Ethnicity: (P)                  | 12. Institutional Racism: (J)      |
| 4. Racial and Ethnic Identity: (R) | 13. Privilege: (C)                 |
| 5. Racism: (F)                     | 14. Collusion: (K)                 |
| 6. Individual Racism: (N)          | 15. Horizontal Racism: (S)         |
| 7. Active Racism: (Q)              | 16. Internalized Racism: (O)       |
| 8. Passive Racism: (A)             | 17. Ally: (D)                      |
| 9. Culture: (G)                    | 18. Empowered Person of Color: (I) |
|                                    | 19. Racism as sin: (H)             |

## Interactive Activity

### TRUE/FALSE QUIZ

#### DIRECTIONS

Circle true or false for each statement about racism.

1. Racism is not a major problem in the United States.  
True or false?
2. The criminal and judicial systems in the U.S. are colorblind. True or false?
3. Racism is decreasing around the globe. True or false?
4. Racism plays a role in a wide range of contemporary global injustices. True or false?



## Interactive Activity

### TRUE/FALSE QUIZ ANSWERS

#### 1. Racism is not a major problem in the United States.

**FALSE.**

According to the U.S. Catholic Bishops, "The continuing existence of racism is apparent . . . when we look beneath the surface of our national life."

"Brothers and Sisters to Us," U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Racism in Our Day, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1979, 4.

•On July 11, 2001, The Washington Post published an article that read: "Whether out of hostility, indifference or simple lack of knowledge, large numbers of white Americans incorrectly believe that blacks are as well off as whites in terms of their jobs, incomes, school and health care, according to a national survey by The Washington Post, the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard University." The story goes on to report that government statistics show that blacks still lag significantly behind whites in all those major categories.

•Institutional racism in health care in the U.S. has significantly affected not only access to health care, but also the quality of health care minorities receive. Institutional racial discrimination in health care delivery, financing, and research continues to exist. In 1999, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights reported to the President and the Congress that: "[The Government's] failure to recognize and eliminate [racial] differences in health care delivery, financing, and research presents a discriminatory barrier that creates and perpetuates differences in health status." Minorities are sicker than White Americans; they have more illness and are dying at a significantly higher rate.

"Institutional Racism in the US Health Care System," Statement to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, The Institute on Race, Health Care and the Law.

#### 2. The criminal and judicial systems in the U.S. are colorblind.

**FALSE.**

According to the U.S. Catholic Bishops: "Racism is apparent when we note that the population in our prisons consists disproportionately of minorities . . . Racism is also apparent in the attitudes and behavior of some law en-

forcement officials and in the unequal availability of legal assistance."

"Brothers and Sisters to Us," U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Racism in Our Day, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1979, 5.

•A 1992 study by the Federal Judicial Center of Federal Firearms and Drug Trafficking Charges found that the average sentence for blacks was 49 times longer than for whites convicted of the same crimes.

•Of the 500 prisoners executed between 1977 and the end of 1998, more than 81% were convicted of the murder of a white, even though blacks and whites are the victims of homicide in almost equal numbers nationwide.

Amnesty International, 1999.

•"Even under the most sophisticated death-penalty statutes, race continues to play a major role in determining who shall live and who shall die."

Former US Supreme Court Justice Harry A. Blackmun, dissenting from the Court's decision in *Collins v. Collins*, 114 S. Ct. 1127, 1135 (1994).

•African Americans and other minorities suffer disproportionate rates of incarceration, accounting for 60 percent of the 1.7 million people currently in jail or prison in the US. African American men are imprisoned at more than eight times the rate of white men, and one third of all young African American men are in jail or prison, on parole, or on probation.

Amnesty International, 2001.

•African American women are imprisoned at eight times, and Hispanic women at four times, the rate of white women, even though the majority of their crimes are considered minor.

Amnesty International, 2001.

•Children of racial and ethnic minority backgrounds are greatly over-represented at all stages of the justice system. They make up 15% of the population between ages 10 and 17, but account for around 31% of youths arrested, 44% of youths held in custody in juvenile facilities, nearly half of all juveniles tried in adult criminal courts, and 58% of all juveniles confined in adult prisons.

Amnesty International, 2001.

## Interactive Activity (continued)

### TRUE/FALSE QUIZ ANSWERS

#### 3. Racism is decreasing around the globe.

**FALSE.**

•The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace at the Vatican released a document in September 2001 that states that globalization has helped increase racism, especially “economic racism.”

•The fruits of globalization are not shared equitably. The global market economy has increased the divide between rich and poor nations and people, often along a racial divide as well. It has deepened patterns of institutional racism and created new forms of exclusion.

*1999 Human Development Report, United Nations Development Program.*

•Around the world millions of people find themselves the victims of legal and social systems that crush their hopes, dreams and aspirations, not because they have committed a crime but because they were born into a particular race and/or ethnic group. Others are unable to receive quality education, health care, shelter, food or clothing because they are trapped in a maze of unjust practices that denies them access to the most basic human rights.

*Battling Global Racism, QUNO-NY.*

#### 4. Racism plays a role in a wide range of contemporary global injustices.

**TRUE.**

According to Pope John Paul II, “At the dawn of a new millennium, there is growing hope that relationships between people will be increasingly inspired by the ideal of a truly universal union among all. Unless this ideal is shared, there will be no way to ensure a stable peace. At the same time, however, it cannot be denied that thick

clouds overshadow these bright hopes. Even now, sad to say, in different parts of the world we are witnessing with growing alarm the aggressive claims of some cultures against others. In the long run, this situation can end in disastrous tensions and conflicts. At the very least it can make more difficult the situation of those ethnic and cultural minorities living in a majority cultural context which is different from their own and prone to hostile and racist ways of thinking and acting.”

“Dialogue between Cultures for a Civilization of Love and Peace,”  
Message for world Day of Peace on January 1, 2001, Pope John Paul II.

•In countries such as Burundi, Burma, Bhutan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Turkey and the former Yugoslavia, millions of people have been forced to flee their homes as a result of racism, racial discrimination, ethnic violence and intolerance.

*Human Rights Watch, 2001.*

•Throughout the world, refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and internally displaced persons are the victims of racial discrimination, racist attacks, xenophobia and ethnic intolerance.

*Human Rights Watch, 2001.*

•The growing barriers to legal entry into the European Union and other Western countries has meant that asylum seekers and migrants increasingly turn to the services of opportunistic, corrupt, and dangerous human trafficking and smuggling syndicates who are able to circumvent routine migration controls, often with great risk to their life, liberty, and freedom.

*Human Rights Watch, 2001.*

## Case Study

### RACISM IN THE UNITED STATES

#### INSTITUTIONAL RACISM IN THE U.S. HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

By Vernellia R. Randall, Professor of Law at Dayton University.  
Reprinted with permission from the author. Available at <http://academic.udayton.edu/race/06hrights/WCAR2001/WCAR02.htm>.

The present health crisis for racial minorities in the United States is part of a long continuum dating back over 400 years. After hundreds of years of active discrimination, efforts were made to admit minorities into the “mainstream” health system but these efforts were flawed. Since 1975 the health status of minorities has steadily eroded and there has been no significant improvements in the removal of barriers that are due to institutional racism.

Minorities are sicker than White Americans; they have more illness and are dying at a significantly higher rate. Because of institutional racism, minorities have less education and fewer educational opportunities. Minorities are disproportionately homeless and have significantly poorer housing options. Racial residential segregation contributes to the concentration of poverty in minority communities. Communities with a high proportion of minorities are more likely than predominantly white communities to be exposed to environmental toxins, including lead and asbestos. Minorities disproportionately work in jobs with higher physical and psycho-social health risks (i.e., migrant farm workers, fast food workers, garment industry workers). Minority communities are frequently the targets of institutions promoting unhealthy products, such as alcohol and tobacco. Thus, the current health status disparity of minorities is the cumulative result of both past and current racism throughout American culture.

Institutional racism in health care has significantly affected not only access to health care, but also the quality of health care received. Institutional racial discrimination in health care delivery, financing, and research continues to exist. In 1999, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights reported to the President and the Congress that: “[The Government’s] failure to recognize and eliminate [racial] differences in health care delivery, financing, and research

presents a discriminatory barrier that creates and perpetuates differences in health status.” Racial discrimination in health care manifests itself in many different ways including:

#### **Barriers to Hospitals and Health Care Institutions:**

The institutional racism that exists in hospitals and health care institutions manifests itself in a number of ways, including the disproportionate closure of hospitals that primarily serve a minority community.

**Barriers to Nursing Homes:** Minorities are disproportionately excluded from nursing homes because of Medicaid policies which result in fewer expenditures on minority populations for nursing home care.

**Barriers to Physicians and Other Providers:** Minority physicians are significantly more likely to practice in minority communities. Yet, minorities are seriously under represented in health care professions and the minuscule effort to solve that problem (affirmative action) is under serious political and legal attack.

**Lack of Economic Access to Health Care:** A disproportionate number of racial minorities have no insurance, are unemployed, are employed in jobs that do not provide health care insurance, disqualify for government assistance programs, or fail to participate because of administrative barriers.

**Racial Disparities in Medical Treatment:** There is overwhelming evidence of racial and ethnic disparities across a wide range of in clinical care in the United States. Studies document that the most favored patient is “White, male, and between the ages of 25 and 44.”

**Disparate Impact of the Intersection of Race and Gender:** The unique experiences of minority women have been largely ignored by the health care system. Race discrimination and sex discrimination intersect to magnify the difficulties minority women face in gaining equal access to quality health care.

#### **Lack of data and standardized collection methods:**

The existing data collection does not allow for regular collection of race data on provider and institutional behavior. The lack of a uniform data collection method makes obtaining an accurate and specific description of race discrimination in the health care system extremely difficult.

## Case Study (continued)

### **Lack of Language and Culturally Competent Care:**

The failure to use bilingual, professionally and culturally competent, and ethnically matched staff in patient/client contact positions has resulted in lack of access, miscommunication and mistreatment for minorities with limited proficiency in English.

The health care financing system has been steadily moving to managed care as a means of rationing health care. There is inadequate oversight to assure that managed care develops more expensive but culturally appropriate treatment modalities, to assure that they do not refuse or minimize the expenditures necessary to develop adequate infrastructure for minority communities, or to assure that the rationing does not result in disproportionately affecting minorities.

### **Institutional Racism and the Law**

Racial inequality in health care persists in the United States because the laws prohibiting racial discrimination are inadequate for addressing issues of institutional racial discrimination. The U.S. legal system has been particularly reluctant to address issues of racial discrimination that result from policies and practices that have a disparate racial impact. In fact, the federal law explicitly allows for such discrimination as long as the institution can demonstrate "business necessity."

In addition, the legal system requires individuals to be aware that the provider or institution has discriminated against them and that they have been injured by the provider, two conditions that are highly unlikely in racial

discrimination in health care. Finally, the health care system, through managed care, has actually built in incentives which may encourage discrimination. Unlike housing, education, lending and employment, the federal government has not taken any action to address these unique civil rights enforcement problems in health care. State and federal law has proven ineffective in reducing and eliminating racial discrimination in health care and the US government has taken little action to correct the problem. In 1999, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights reported that "[the government's] failure to address . . . deeper, systemic problems is part of a larger deficiency . . . a seeming inability to assert its authority within the health care system."

### **Summary**

Medicine has found cures and controls for many afflictions, improving the health of all Americans. However, health institutions have failed to extend the same magnitude of improvement in health among White Americans to minority Americans. Health institutions have failed to eliminate the racially disparate distribution of health care. In fact, health institutions perpetuate distinctions among racial groups. In the case of health care discrimination, domestic laws do not address the current barriers faced by minorities; the executive branch, the legislatures and the courts are singularly reluctant to hold health care institutions and providers responsible for institutional racism. Thus, the United States has failed to meet its obligation under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

## Case Study

### RACISM IN THE UNITED STATES

#### BLACK, WHITE AND RED LINES

Excerpts taken from *Black, White and Red lines*, by Nia Fombi, <http://www.columbusalive.com/1998/19981112/word.html>

Recently, a jury in Richmond, Virginia ruled that local insurance giant Nationwide Insurance is not always on your side if you are black and need homeowners' insurance. In this potentially landmark discrimination case, the circuit court panel ordered Nationwide to pay \$100.5 million in punitive damages to Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME), a Richmond-based fair housing organization.

HOME is one of five organizations across the country that shared a \$1.5 million grant in 1995 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to conduct housing discrimination testing. HOME had black and white testers pose as homeowners to determine whether Nationwide's Richmond operations treated customers differently based on race. The jury found that the company offered better coverage to homes in white neighborhoods, and at the same time, would often deny coverage or offer less desirable, higher priced coverage on comparable homes in black neighborhoods.

This was the first of several pending cases against Nationwide related to the company's alleged redlining practices. In April, Nationwide settled a suit for \$5.3 million in Toledo that was similar to the Richmond case. This is separate from the March 1997 racial discrimination settlement reached between Nationwide and the U.S. Justice Department. The feds accused the company of violating the Fair Housing Act by denying coverage for properties located in central city neighborhoods. Although Nationwide admitted no wrongdoing, the company agreed to invest \$13 million over six years in predominately minority neighborhoods.

The Richmond case, and those brought against Nationwide's competitors such as State Farm, Allstate and American Family Insurance, reflect a larger problem of institutionalized racism. We've seen examples of institutionalized racism not only in the insurance industry, but all across the corporate spectrum—from Texaco to Denny's.

What do I mean by institutional racism? Within our American society, there are deeply entrenched values and beliefs that impact the economic and social mobility of people of color. Sure, laws have been changed to make it illegal to discriminate against blacks and other minorities, but the core beliefs that these laws attempted to change have not disappeared.

If you watched PBS's documentary *Africans in America*, then you may understand that at the center of racial discrimination is the subconscious belief that black people are inferior to whites. The system that produced slavery pounded this belief into our collective consciousness for more than 300 years, and 40 years of civil rights advancements have not changed these subliminal attitudes.

So what does all this have to do with Nationwide? Their case is just a symptom of the larger problem. Corporations are made up of people, and people bring their own prejudices and attitudes to these companies. From corporate executives to sales personnel, unwritten company policies on how certain groups are dealt with develop within the context of their own personal belief systems. This is how racism becomes institutionalized.

Corporations can throw money at racism as a means to remedy their bad decisions. But until corporate leaders, and regular everyday people, make changes in their own hearts and minds, we all will continue to be caught in the quagmire of institutional racism.

## Case Study (continued)

### RACISM IN THE UNITED STATES

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Both of these United States case studies deal with institutional racism, racism that has become part of the system or structure. Is this a new concept to you? Given our country's history, why do you think more Americans are not as aware of institutional racism as they are of individual racism?

2. What are some possible ways to give more exposure to racist structures that prevent home ownership and proper health care? What can and should be done to remedy these injustices?

3. Note that Catholic Social Teaching is very concerned with unjust structures, calling them "structures of sin." Why do you think the Church promotes structural justice and is concerned about structural injustice?

4. Why is institutional racism harder to identify and deal with than individual acts of racism?

## Case Studies

### RACISM AROUND THE WORLD

**India:** More than one-sixth of the India's population, some 160 million people, live as "untouchables" or Dalits—literally meaning "oppressed"—and are at the bottom of India's caste system. "Untouchability" was abolished under India's constitution in 1950, but the practice still continues, especially in rural areas. Dalits are relegated to the most menial of tasks, denied access to land, and forced to work in degrading conditions. They may not use the same wells, visit the same temples, drink from the same cups in tea stalls, or lay claim to land that is legally theirs, and Dalit children are frequently made to sit in the back of classrooms.

For more information, see [www.hri.ca/racism/Submitted/Author/WCC.htm](http://www.hri.ca/racism/Submitted/Author/WCC.htm) or <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/52a/index-ec.html>.

**Australia:** Aborigines are believed to have lived in Australia for between 60,000 and 40,000 years. Their early ancestors came from South-East Asia. It is estimated that there were between 300,000 and 1,000,000 Aborigines in Australia when European settlers first arrived in 1788. The process of colonization by European powers, as might be expected, has had a radical effect on Aboriginal culture. The settlers viewed the natives as barbarians, seizing tribal land and, in many cases, following a policy of pacification by force. Many others died of disease, starvation, cultural dislocation and neglect. Today, there are fewer than 230,000 Aborigines in Australia, less than 2% of the country's population.

For more information, see <http://cf.vicnet.net.au/aboriginal> or <http://www.caa.org.au/campaigns/election/globalisation/indigenous.html>.

**Brazil:** Brazil did not abolish slavery until 1888, long after the rest of the Americas. Historians estimate that 3 million to 6 million slaves were brought from Africa to Brazil, where they toiled on sugar and tobacco plantations and in gold and diamond mines. Today, Blacks in Brazil constitute about half of the population of 160 million but remain at the bottom of the economic and social ladder, living in conditions of extreme poverty and violence. Illiteracy among blacks is 37%, compared to 15% among whites. Life expectancy is eight years shorter than for whites. Ninety percent of black women have only an elementary school education. Black women earn 48% of what white women earn in the same professions. Blacks are almost absent

from government, business and universities, even though Brazil has the second largest black population in the world. The Blacks of Brazil are also the largest population of people descended from slaves.

For more information, see <http://oneworld.org/ni/issue226/black.htm> or <http://www.rose-hulman.edu/~delacova/brazil/brazil-race.htm>.

**Europe:** There are believed to be about 12 million Romas (Gypsies) scattered throughout the world. It is impossible to estimate the total population with accuracy since many governments do not record Romas in their census figures. Also, many Romas conceal their ethnic origin out of fear of discrimination. They remain to date the most deprived ethnic group of Europe. Almost everywhere, their fundamental rights are threatened. Disturbing cases of racist violence targeting Romas have occurred in recent years. They are discriminated against in employment, education, health care, and administrative and other services. Hate speech against them also deepens the negative stereotypes which pervade European public opinion. Because of low or lack of education and almost no permanent jobs (more than 80% of adults in the Roma population are without a permanent job), Romas are relegated to the lowest social section of their societies.

For more information, see <http://interlog.com/~leerom/roma/history.html> or <http://home6.swipnet.se/~w-69051/romapeople.html#link7> or <http://www.geocities.com/~patrin/history.htm>.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the similarities in these case studies? The differences? Were you aware of the problems discussed in India, Australia, Brazil and Europe? Why or why not? Are you aware of other problems in the world where there is prejudice and discrimination?
2. Read the Fact Sheet on the U.N. World Conference on Racism. Why do you think the Vatican supported this Conference and the Pope sent a representative? Do you think the Conference was well covered by the American media? Why or why not? Why do many countries in the world want to work together to deal with all form of racial and ethnic prejudice? What can be gained by joint efforts?

## Fact Sheet

### WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM

**What:** The United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR). This conference was a historic event in the struggle against racism, xenophobia and related intolerance. The final output, The Declaration and Program of Action, serves as a framework for a continued and concerted effort by governments, international institutions and civil society to advance in the struggle against racism.

**Who:** In standard UN format, government delegates at the official conference were recognized as the spokespersons and decision-makers for countries. Another standard practice at UN meetings is a parallel conference and other side events organized by NGOs (non-governmental organizations, or non-profit groups representing different segments civil society). NGO delegates brought fresh perspectives and influenced The Declaration and Program of Action to insure it contained progressive language for solutions to racism. 160 states and an estimated 15,000 representatives of NGOs took part in the conference, including young adults, who had their own summit and their own documents.

**Where:** Durban, South Africa.

**When:** August 31 to September 9, 2001. Similar conferences had previously been held in Geneva in 1978 and 1983.

**How:** A year prior to the conference, many national and international meetings and consultations were held to discuss racism issues. Experts and long-time racism advocates made contributions to the discussions. Reports from these meetings served as a basis for drafting an official document. The work at the conference involved reviewing the issues in the document and reaching an agreement.

**Background:** Adopted by the UN in 1965, the *International Convention on the Elimination of all Form of Racial Discrimination* is one of the earliest instruments

designed to protect the rights of people. To date, 157 countries have ratified this treaty. The United States did not ratify the Convention until October, 1994 and made its first report available in September, 2000--five years late.

**Issues:** This conference was about racism and oppression facing communities of color the world over. As a result, its focus was much broader than the previous two conferences. Its themes were as follows:

- Sources, causes, forms and contemporary manifestations of racism, xenophobia and related intolerance.
- Victims of racism, xenophobia and intolerance.
- Measure of prevention, education and protection to eradicate racism, xenophobia and related intolerance.
- Effective remedies, recourse, redress and other measures.
- Strategies to achieve full and effective equality, enhancement of the UN and other mechanisms in combating racism, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The issues addressed at the conference included: **criminal justice, education, hate crimes, health, indigenous peoples, migration and trafficking, refugees, environment, poverty and globalization, gender and multiple forms of discrimination, and media and new information technologies, including the internet.**

To read the full document, see [www.unhchr.ch](http://www.unhchr.ch).



## Fact Sheet (continued)

### WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM

**The United States--A Non-Participant:** Despite the importance of these conferences on racism, the United States did not participate in any of them. There are two main reasons. Some of the documents from the conferences treat Zionism as a form of racism, critiquing America's long-time ally, Israel. Thus both Israel and the United States boycotted the conference. Zionism is a movement which supports a homeland for Jewish people in Israel (formerly Palestine), and the United States has always been a strong supporter of Israel. Unfortunately, establishing this homeland for the Jews has resulted in unfair treatment of the Palestinians (see <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/qpal/index.html>). This is why there is language in the UN documents which relates Zionism with racism.

However, many NGOs believe the issue of Zionism is not really why the United States has refused to participate in the conferences. One issue of the conferences has been the suggestion that restitution should be made to Afro-descendants of slaves to reverse the lasting effects of the transatlantic slave trade. Compensation, or "reparations," as they are called, could take the form of an educational fund or social programs for Afro-descendants, or in the form of debt relief for developing nations to rectify the social and economic marginalization which has resulted from slavery. As a participant in the slave trade, the United States would be liable to award reparations to its own citizens of African descent should this settlement be approved. Therefore some U.S. NGOs have charged that the real reason the U.S. boycotted WCAR was to avoid any discussion of reparations because of the economic implications they would have.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think the United Nations chooses to address the issues surrounding racism in international meetings? Do you think this is an issue that still requires international attention and action?
2. Do you feel that the instruments the United Nations provides, such as documents and international laws against racism, are effective ways of fighting racism?
3. Were you surprised that the United States refused to participate in the conferences? Why do you think they refused?
5. What aspects of American history make the United States a poor world leader in the struggle against racism? What is the United States presently doing that continues the trend of poor leadership?

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What do you know about "reparations?" What do you need to learn? How does this pertain to the struggle against racism? Research this topic to find out what the international community, the United States, or different NGOs are doing about this issue.
2. What do you know about the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians, and the United States's involvement? How is this related to racism? What does the United Nations say about this issue? What has Pope John Paul II said?

## Fact Sheet

### ATTITUDES TOWARDS DIFFERENCES

#### Repulsion

People who are different are strange, bad and/or crazy. Any steps to change “THEM” in order to become more “normal” are justifiable.

#### Pity

People who are different are born that way, which is pitiful. They are undesirable and/or less civilized. Normal behavior should be required of “THEM” in order to help them.

#### Tolerance

People who are different are less evolved, and will grow out of it. They need protection and tolerance, like a child who is still learning.

#### Acceptance

People who are different must be accommodated and accepted; they are seen as less valuable than “US.”

#### Support

People who are different have rights which must be safeguarded, despite our discomfort around “THEM.”

#### Admiration

People who are different face a serious challenge. Maybe I need to look at myself and work on my own biases.

#### Appreciation

People who are different make society diverse, which is valuable. Because of this, I am willing to confront my own and others’ insensitive attitudes.

#### Nurturance

People who are different are indispensable to society. I love the differences in “THEM,” and I am willing to be an advocate of diversity.

## Fact Sheet

### WHAT IS PRIVILEGE?

I can, if I wish, arrange to be in the company of people of my race (or ethnic group) most of the time.

If I should need or choose to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.

I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.

I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.

I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race (or ethnic group) widely represented in positive ways.

When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my race (or ethnic group) made it what it is.

I can be fairly sure that my children will learn about the contributions of their race (or ethnic group) in school.

Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my race (or ethnic group) not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.

I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.

I can swear, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or illiteracy of my race (or ethnic group).

I can speak in public to a powerful group without putting my race (or ethnic group) on trial.

I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race (or ethnic group).

I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial (or ethnic) group.

I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.

I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to "the person in charge," I will be facing a person of my race (or ethnic group).

If a traffic cop pulls me over I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race (or ethnic group).

I can walk down a residential street in a wealthy neighborhood and no one will think that I am a maid or a gardener.

If I make any grammatical errors, no one will attribute my mistakes to my race (or ethnic group).

I can walk into a store late in the evening and probably no one will think that I am there to rob the store.

Almost everyone who looks at me will assume that I am an American citizen and can speak English.

If I have a responsible job, no one thinks I got it because of "quotas."

I can borrow money from the bank or lending institution without the loan officer wondering if I can pay it back.

People hear that I am a college graduate and no one is surprised.

If I want to teach my children about my culture, there are many museums and cultural events to which I can take them.

I can drive a large, expensive car without worrying that someone will think, "Isn't that typical?"

No one assumes that when I give an opinion that I am speaking on behalf of my race (or ethnic group).

People of a different race (or ethnic group) waiting at a bus stop with me late at night will not likely be frightened of me.



## Interactive Activity

### WHAT IS YOUR DQ (DIVERSITY QUOTIENT)? DIRECTIONS

In some settings you are in the majority (dominant culture, race, religion gender, etc.) and in others you are in the minority. Please complete both sections of this questionnaire. Circle only one of the four possible answers to each question. Then score it to determine your Diversity Quotient (DQ). You won't be asked to reveal it so you can be completely candid.

#### When I am in the Majority...

1. I am aware of being in the majority and listen to minority members comments about how they are affected by us.
  - a. Usually
  - b. Sometimes
  - c. Seldom
  - d. Never
2. I try to include minority members in my work and social groups.
  - a. Usually
  - b. Sometimes
  - c. Seldom
  - d. Never
3. When I see a minority person arrested (on TV, in the newspaper, etc.), I tend to view the entire minority group negatively.
  - a. Seldom
  - b. Sometimes
  - c. Usually
  - d. Always
4. I have voluntarily devoted time to programs/organizations which promote diversity.
  - a. Three or more times
  - b. Twice
  - c. Once
  - d. Never

5. I challenge practices/policies (at work, in government, in my community or social circles) which discriminate on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity or sexual preference.
  - a. Always
  - b. Usually
  - c. Sometimes
  - d. Seldom
6. I recognize that when I'm pressured, I can revert to narrower attitudes, e.g., thinking my group is right or better and others wrong or not as good as mine.
  - a. Usually
  - b. Sometimes
  - c. Seldom
  - d. Never
7. I contribute money to groups which promote diversity.
  - a. Often
  - b. Occasionally
  - c. Seldom
  - d. Never
8. I believe I can learn and grow from exposure to different cultures and beliefs.
  - a. Usually
  - b. Sometimes
  - c. Seldom
  - d. Never
9. I confront derogatory remarks about minorities.
  - a. Usually
  - b. Sometimes
  - c. Seldom
  - d. Never
10. I speak in generalizations, e.g., "You can't trust men/women", etc., "Blacks can really dance", "Chaldeans are clannish", etc.
  - a. Rarely
  - b. Not often
  - c. Fairly often
  - d. Usually

## Interactive Activity (continued)

11. Though I may or may not speak in such generalizations, I tend to think that way.

- a. Seldom
- b. Sometimes
- c. Usually
- d. Always

12. I tell disparaging (demeaning or disrespectful) ethnic jokes.

- a. Never
- b. Seldom
- c. Sometimes
- d. Often

13. I tell disparaging gay jokes.

- a. Never
- b. Seldom
- c. Sometimes
- d. Often

14. I tell disparaging jokes about the other sex.

- a. Never
- b. Seldom
- c. Sometimes
- d. Often

15. My buying, investing and memberships support businesses and organizations which promote diversity.

- a. Usually
- b. Sometimes
- c. Seldom
- d. Never

16. I realize that “outsiders” recognize my cultural bias better than I do.

- a. Usually
- b. Sometimes
- c. Seldom
- d. Never

17. I believe in equality and let people in my culture know about my commitment to it.

- a. Usually
- b. Sometimes
- c. Seldom
- d. Never

18. I support minorities moving into my neighborhood.

- a. True
- b. False
- c. I’m opposed to this
- d. I have worked against it

19. I make unwarranted assumptions when I see a stranger of another race or culture walking in my neighborhood.

- a. Seldom
- b. Sometimes
- c. Usually

### When I am in the Minority...

1. I realize I can make unique contributions to the majority group.

- a. Typically
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

2. I feel proud of myself and my group.

- a. Typically
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

3. I actively promote the self-esteem of fellow minority members.

- a. Typically
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

4. When subjected to ridicule and/or prejudice I downplay my cultural identity and traditions.

- a. Never
- b. Sometimes
- c. Often
- d. Always

## Interactive Activity (continued)

5. I am active in an organization(s) which promote(s) my minority group's welfare.

- a. True
- b. Provide financial support only
- c. False
- d. I would be ashamed to do so

6. While I realize I don't have to hide my cultural identity, I realize skills are needed to succeed in the dominant culture.

- a. Describes me
- b. Somewhat like me
- c. Unlike my approach
- d. Very unlike me

7. When I succeed in the dominant culture, I don't distance myself from others of my background.

- a. True
- b. Somewhat true
- c. Somewhat untrue
- d. Untrue

8. I realize that under pressure, I can tend to revert to stereotypical thinking about the majority.

- a. Usually
- b. Sometimes
- c. Seldom
- d. Never

9. I sympathize with and collaborate with other minorities to achieve common objectives in the dominant culture.

- a. Typically
- b. Sometimes
- c. Seldom
- d. Never

10. I talk mainly with my own people when in mixed company.

- a. Rarely
- b. Not usually
- c. Usually
- d. Always

11. I tend to blame the dominant group for everything that goes wrong.

- a. Rarely
- b. Not usually
- c. Usually
- d. Always

12. I share my minority group's distinctive views and accomplishments with the dominant group.

- a. Usually
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

13. I present my minority group's views and experiences in ways majority members understand and usually respect.

- a. Usually
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

## DIVERSITY KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS

1. Name three movies you have seen depicting people of color? (For students of color, use your own group or other groups.)

2. List at least five books written by people of color that you have read. Which ones would you recommend? Why?

3. List at least one periodicals with which you are familiar that is Black/Chicano/Asian/Native American in origin and content.

4. Name three multicultural events have you attended.

5. Name three television shows depicting people of color and/or themes about their lives.

6. Decide if any of the television shows you named depict accurate representatives of those groups.

7. List ten nationally known people of color and explain their achievements.

8. List and describe the achievements of five people of color in your local community.

## Interactive Activity (continued)

### DIVERSITY QUOTIENT SCORING

1. Count the number of times you circled an “a” response (the first possible response) and enter that number in the appropriate blank (6 in the example).

2. Then enter the number of “b” responses in the second blank space (22 in the example), and so on.

3. When all four blanks are filled in, multiply to determine the subtotals ( $5 \times 6 = 30$ ,  $3 \times 22 = 66$ , etc.). Then add to obtain your DQ (100 in example).

Add five points for each of the Diversity Knowledge questions to which you gave a complete answer; give 3 points for each of the additional questions to which you gave a partial answer (35 in the example).

A score of 100-120 is average.

#### Example

	Points		Number		Totals
a.	5	x	6	=	30
b.	3	x	22	=	66
c.	1	x	4	=	4
d.	0	x	0	=	0
					-----
					Subtotal: 100
					Subtotal: 100
					+ Points for Diversity Knowledge Questions: 35
					-----
					<b>Total: 135</b>

#### Your Score

	Points		Number		Totals
a.	5	x	_____	=	_____
b.	3	x	_____	=	_____
c.	1	x	_____	=	_____
d.	0	x	_____	=	_____
					-----
					Subtotal: _____
					Subtotal: _____
					+ Points for Diversity Knowledge Questions: _____
					-----
					<b>Total: _____</b>

## Reflection

### DIRECTIONS

In small groups or with your entire group, read the following reflection and discuss the questions. If the discussion occurs in small groups, choose a representative from your group to report back some of the central issues you discussed.

### UNCOVERING RACISM

The U.S. Bishops have said that “racism degrades the sacred dignity of humankind.” Christ’s Incarnation revealed this sacred dignity, which makes each one of us equally special in the sight of God. Thus “racism is a sin that divides the human family” and it is “a denial of the truth of the Incarnation.”

Racism has its roots in viewing a person or a people as “Other,” not like us, to be discounted and/or feared in some way. On the other hand, Catholic Social Teaching calls us to meet other people as complex “subjects” in an “I-Thou” relationship, rather than viewing others as “object”—objects of our fear, of our distrust, even of our charity—in an “I-other” relationship, one that makes others less human, less complex, less deserving of God’s gifts and grace than we are.

### FOR DISCUSSION

In the history of the world, in our country’s history, and in recent events, give several examples of how viewing another group as “Other” has led to individual and group violence and to social sin (social sin occurs when racism and discrimination becomes a part of a legal, political, and social system).

Have there been times when we have feared and/or looked down on others as “Other” than ourselves, and/or felt justified in excluding others, in our thoughts as well as actions? Why is this easy to do? Do we unconsciously or consciously believe there is a norm others must meet for us to respect them? What kinds of differences do we find difficult to accept? Sr. Helen Prejean, who works with prisoners on death row, has said that “everyone is better than the worst thing he has done because we all are children of God.” What is the challenge in living out such a belief?

How does the language we use contribute to emphasizing difference? How have we discriminated in language and/or action; how have we been discriminated against?

Are there aspects of our culture and our society that contribute to viewing some individuals and groups as “Other” than us and our group? Have older stereotypes—about people different from the white middle class, which were presented in the media, in popular culture, and in many communities in the U.S.—been eliminated completely? Can you identify any stereotypes that have been modified but still exist in subtle ways in popular culture and in some of our communities? Are there new stereotypes that are forming that reflect fears about groups other than our own, about the “new” Americans, about other groups in the world community?



## Fact Sheet

### ACTIVELY PROMOTING DIVERSITY— BECOMING AN ALLY

#### What is an Ally?

An ally is a member of a social group who takes a stand against social injustice directed at all groups (Whites who speak out against racism, men who are anti-sexist). An ally works to be an agent of social change rather than an agent of oppression.

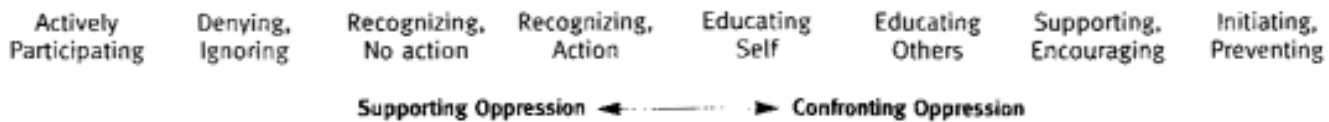
#### Characteristics of an Ally

- feels good about own social group membership; is comfortable and proud of own identity
- takes responsibility for learning about own and other's heritage, culture, and experience, and how oppression works in everyday life,
- listens to and respects the perspectives and experiences of other groups' members,
- acknowledges privileges received as a result of group status and works to eliminate or change privileges into rights that other group members may also enjoy,
- recognizes that unlearning oppressive beliefs and actions is a lifelong process, not a single event, and welcomes each learning opportunity,

- as willing to take risks, try new behaviors, act in spite of own fear and resistance from other agents,
- is willing to make mistakes, learn from them, and try again,
- is willing to be confronted about own behavior and attitudes and consider change,
- is committed to taking action against discrimination in own sphere of influence,
- understands own growth and response patterns and when she/he is on a learning edge,
- understands the connections among all forms of social injustice,
- believes she/he can make a difference by acting and speaking out against all social injustice, and
- knows how to cultivate support from other allies.

## Fact Sheet

### ACTION ON RACISM CONTINUUM



**Actively Participating:** Telling oppressive jokes, putting down people from target groups, intentionally avoiding target group members, discriminating against target group members, verbally or physically harassing target group members.

**Denying:** Enabling oppression by denying that target group members are oppressed. Does not actively oppress, but by denying that oppression exists, colludes with oppression.

**Recognizing, No Action:** Is aware of oppressive actions by self or others and their harmful effects, but takes no action to stop this behavior. This inaction is the result of fear, lack of information, confusion about what to do. Experiences discomfort at the contradiction between awareness and action.

**Recognizing, Action:** Is aware of oppression, recognizes oppressive actions of self and others and takes action to stop it.

**Educating Self:** Taking actions to learn more about oppression and the experiences and heritage of target group members by reading, attending workshops, seminars, cultural events, participating in discussions, joining organizations or groups that oppose oppression, attending social action and change events.

**Educating Others:** Moving beyond only educating self to question and dialogue with others too. Rather than only stopping oppressive comments or behaviors, also engaging people in discussion to share why you object to a comment or action.

**Supporting, Encouraging:** Supporting others who speak out against oppression or who are working to be more inclusive of target group members by backing up others who speak out, forming an allies group, joining a coalition group.

**Initiating, Preventing:** Working to change individual and institutional actions and policies that discriminate against target group members, planning educational programs or other events, working for passage of legislation that protects target group members from discrimination, being explicit about making sure target group members are full participants in organizations or groups.

## Case Study

### WE HAVE A DREAM

By Richard K. Taylor with the assistance of LaVonne France.

*Reprinted with permission from U.S. Catholic magazine,*

*Claretian Publications, <http://www.uscatholic.org>. 800-328-6515*

Colette Oldham, a 16-year-old member of St. Vincent de Paul Church in Philadelphia, attends a private high school that is predominantly white. As a white teen from the suburbs, Oldham never had an opportunity to meet African Americans her own age, let alone become friends with them.

In October 1999, Oldham joined Youth Against Racism, a young people's group formed as part of St. Vincent's continuing racial healing process. Working with a trained psychologist, Youth Against Racism places teens—black, white, and Hispanic—into a single group and pushes them to talk about racism and prejudice. Oldham recalls how difficult it was at the beginning: "I was very careful because I didn't want anyone to say, 'How can she say something like that?'"

Oldham now has friends such as Sheena Rogers, a black 16-year-old from the inner city. Without Youth Against Racism, both say they might never have met. In the group, says Rogers, "everybody got to see each other as equals. We realized we judged people when we didn't know them." The teens have joined in activities to combat racism, including leading another teen group in discussions on the subject. "Little things can create a domino effect," says Oldham. "Even if we change one person's mind, that's one person less who's a racist."

### What a little organizing can do

Many things can crack the common ground among Catholics: differences in theology, fights over religious practice, strong opinions about gender roles or the liturgy, to name a few.

Tensions between the races, especially between blacks and whites, also can split open the ground on which Catholics stand. This is true even among people who share the same worshipping community and beliefs. Since 1997, parishioners at St. Vincent de Paul have joined in a parish-wide racial healing process and learned that creative organizing, backed by prayer, love, and faith, can create powerful energies to confront and begin to cast out the ugly demon of racism.

Founded in 1851, St. Vincent is located in Germantown, a poor and working-class section of Philadelphia whose population is more than 85 percent black. St. Vincent's membership, however, is 85 percent white. One of the main reasons for this disparity is the history of racial prejudice and discrimination, both locally and nationally, in the Catholic Church.

As was true at other parishes, for many decades black Catholics were not made to feel welcome at St. Vincent. Similarly, few Catholics greeted or supported blacks who moved into the neighborhood. Instead, blacks were met with hostility. Rocks were thrown through their windows; their children could not attend the segregated parish school.

In 1912, when black children were forced to stand at the end of the line to receive First Communion, disheartened black members, with the help of Mother Katharine Drexel, petitioned for and founded their own church, St. Catherine of Siena. When the archdiocese closed St. Catherine in 1993, the wound black Catholics received in 1912 only deepened, creating suspicion and resentment that has lasted to this day.

Ironically, another reason for the disparity between the racial makeup of the neighborhood and the parish is St. Vincent's reputation as a parish on fire with the spirit of Vatican II. With its emphasis on renewal of the liturgy, lay participation, service to the poor, and commitment to peace and justice, it has become a magnet parish, drawing its 1,500 members from seventy different zip codes in the Philadelphia metropolitan area.

Many new parishioners come from the suburbs and are white. Today, black membership at St. Vincent is slowly growing, but given its history of racism and magnetic attraction for white Catholics, it is no wonder that black Catholics are in the minority. As parishioners actively working to create a more racially aware St. Vincent, we have learned some important lessons on how to create community from our differences:

### Lesson 1: Know what you want and say it clearly

For years an interracial group in the parish, known as the African American Leadership Ministry (AALM), has kept

## Case Study (continued)

the concerns of people of color before the parish community. But our workshops and speakers on race relations reached only a small portion of St. Vincent's large membership.

Wanting to create a wider impact, in early 1997, the AALM sent a detailed proposal to the parish council and staff, outlining a long-term process for racial healing. We envisioned St. Vincent as a place where everyone would find a safe environment to examine and overcome their prejudices, where people who suffer from racial prejudice would feel welcome and find solidarity in their struggle.

We rooted our proposal in Catholic theology and social teaching and detailed the steps we believed would move the parish toward our goal. After some small changes, the council and staff gave their approval and asked us to carry it out.

We will never forget the meeting when we first realized what we had gotten ourselves into. We had planned occasional speakers and workshops in the past, but this would take an enormous commitment of time and energy. We held hands around our meeting table and prayed hard for the wisdom and strength to see this through.

Thus we learned our first lesson: how important it is to know what you want and to articulate it clearly. In addition, we needed the patience to enter into a dialogue with the parish leadership and the humility to accept valid proposals for change. Just as vital is commitment—taking responsibility to set the process in motion and to make it happen. Most important of all, we learned to ask for God's help all the way along.

### **Lesson 2: Chaos can be a step on the road to true community**

When we started off, our AALM group decided to meet together for a retreat, believing that we should try out the process ourselves before introducing it to the parish.

The retreat was, to put it mildly, a disaster. White and black members realized that some of their views were miles apart. White participants said things that came across to blacks as expressions of unconscious racism. At

times, white members angered black participants by appearing to dismiss their views casually: "How can you be sure the store detective was being racist when he followed you around?" On the other hand, some white members were taken aback by the anger and vehemence with which certain black members spoke. At the planned "celebration" dinner after the retreat, we sat in stony silence or tried desperately to make polite conversation.

In the week following the retreat, many members of our ministry, both black and white, decided that it would be too painful to continue to work together. Rumors of resignations flew. Then someone recalled a handout from a previous diversity workshop on the three basic stages in the development of community and collaboration across racial lines.

The first stage is superficial pseudo-community—polite "niceness," where no one steps on anyone's toes or raises difficult issues. At this point, people want to avoid conflict or the perception that they are prejudiced or overly angry.

Stage two is chaos and emptiness, which ensues when people decide to break through the superficiality and face the real issues that racism raises. Conflict emerges. People get angry and fearful. Many feel that they are going backward, away from a loving community. The problems raised seem overwhelming or unsolvable.

But if people can hang on through the chaos stage, examine themselves, share their fears and vulnerabilities, admit their prejudices, and express a willingness to change and speak the truth in love, chaos can give way to stage three: real community.

As we reminded each other of these stages, we began to realize, "Hey, we're making progress. We're right where we should be, in the chaos stage." We met again, prayed together, committed to one another, and went forward.

The lesson that chaos can lead to real community carried over into our broader work with parishioners. It brought hope—and humor—to what might have been despair. It also encouraged us to add retreats, potlucks, and other social activities to our schedule of regular AALM meetings, so we could get to know one another more deeply. In addition, we learned how important it is to draw upon the

## Case Study (continued)

expertise of non-parishioners with experience in diversity training, conflict resolution, and the like.

### Lesson 3: Personalize the message

The Sunday we kicked off the racial healing process at St. Vincent, our priests gave homilies on racial justice and reconciliation at each Mass. After the homilies, AALM members spoke of their own experiences of racism.

The black team members, whom most people at Mass knew at least by sight, described the realities of racism and its painful, limiting impact. The white speakers, rather than presenting themselves as great fighters for racial justice, admitted their own racial prejudices, how bias was ingrained in them at an early age, and how the stereotyping “tapes” still play in their heads. They also shared what was motivating them to move beyond guilt, to overcome their own racism, and to join the struggle for justice and healing.

Because we personalized the message, these talks had a great impact on parishioners. After hearing the black speakers, it was hard for anyone to pretend that racism no longer exists or that Christians have no obligation to fight it. The white speakers’ humility and admission of their own racism made it possible for many white listeners to say, “I don’t have to pretend that I’m free of prejudice; maybe I can bring my prejudice out into the light and be part of a movement to eliminate racism.”

As worshipers left church that day, AALM members greeted them warmly at each door and handed them articles on race relations. We also set up a permanent literature table with copies of articles and materials on racial justice and healing.

### Lesson 4: Engage the parish

Had our team appeared to know all the answers, that might have been the end of our impact on the parish. Instead, we tried to draw parishioners into the process. Rather than judging them or making them feel guilty, we approached parishioners with love and, at the same time, we sought to educate and challenge them with the best materials we could find on racism and how to overcome it. We found ways to make their opinions count.

Our team sent out a questionnaire asking every parishioner: (1) What are we currently doing pretty well in the parish to create racial healing? (2) What more can we do to deepen racial healing?

Answers to the questionnaire, which were presented to the entire parish, revealed parishioners’ strong interest in being part of small groups. These groups would be places where they would feel safe enough to honestly discuss the issue of racism and what to do about it.

### Lesson 5: Create “safe spaces” where healing can happen

Our ministry took on the challenge of organizing those small groups. One member, with help from the team and outside experts, worked for weeks to develop a guidebook that outlined a small-group process to probe racism. The team also trained small-group facilitators, realizing that the groups could become bogged down if left entirely on their own.

Our ministry soon saw how important it was to create well-organized and skillfully facilitated “safe spaces” where parishioners could delve deeper into racial healing. The results were little short of amazing. Thirty small groups formed with 128 parishioners participating. As the groups got going, ripples spread out to others as the 128 shared their insights from group discussions and exercises.

Perhaps the greatest lesson was for white participants who, often for the first time, grasped that American racism has conveyed to them unearned white privilege.

“Racism had seemed nebulous to me before,” says white parishioner Carroll Clay, “but the process gave me a much more concrete understanding, especially about ‘white privilege’ and how it impacts everything.” Her husband, Joe, says that he learned for the first time about systemic racism and how it benefits white people. During the process, the Clays moved from their predominantly white suburban community to a thoroughly integrated city neighborhood.

### Lesson 6: Don’t limit your commitment

In early 1998, our diocesan bishop, Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua, put out a forceful pastoral letter, “Healing Racism Through Faith and Truth”, that named racism a sin

## Case Study (continued)

and contagious moral disease that can and must be eradicated. Bevilacqua called upon all Catholics to “renew our efforts to end the evil of racism.” This letter provided a fitting prelude to the next stage of our racial healing process: making a long-term commitment.

The time line of our initial proposal outlined a two-year process plus some follow-up. (Church members are accustomed to such time-limited programs, after which we move on to something else.) As we confronted the sin of racism, however, we came to see that a short program could not expect to bring justice and healing.

On a Sunday in the spring of 1998, our pastor, Father Aidan Rooney, C.M., announced from the pulpit that addressing racism is a long-term process. In fact, he said, it is part of our very identity as Christians.

Racism in the post-civil-rights-movement era has taken a more cunning form. Its demonic power has transformed into more subtle shapes than at the time when colored drinking fountain signs abounded. This makes it more difficult to eliminate, though no less urgent. It underlines the importance of providing parishioners with well-written information and words of encouragement to recognize and combat the new forms racism has taken.

We know we are nowhere near the end of our racial healing process. At least one parishioner has gone to

another parish because of objections to what St. Vincent is doing. Some of our white parishioners are still blissfully unaware of (or try to overlook) today’s racism and the maddening frustrations people of color still face. Others, used to time-limited programs, keep asking, “When will this be over?”

At an even deeper level, some parishioners, whom we all regard as good people, just don’t get it. “I’m not prejudiced,” they say, “I wasn’t around during slavery. I’m not responsible for racism. I don’t see any need to get involved.” We are still perplexed about how to reach these people. How can we help them become aware of their prejudices? How can we help them see that it is not enough to be just a good person, a non-racist? You must be actively antiracist if racism is ever to be overcome.

Some of our white parishioners have recognized their prejudices and unearned white privilege, but this recognition has made them feel guilty and immobilized. Maybe we can help them develop a new and positive antiracist self-image. This image, while renouncing unjust white privilege, uses the power they have to side with people of color as they struggle for equality. It’s a great journey, but we have a long way to go.

*Taylor and France co-chair the African American Leadership Ministry of St. Vincent de Paul Church in Philadelphia. Taylor is the parish coordinator of ministry development; France, a parish member, is a poet and professional chemist.*

## Further Resources

### Books:

#### *Love Thy Neighbor as Thy Self*

An excellent collection of articles written by bishops on racism. Developed by the U.S. bishops' Committee on African American Catholics, the volume begins with the Oral Report from the Committee to the bishops at their 1998 General Meeting. Articles are arranged into sections on Catholic social teaching, Catholic Expressions/Activities, Dr. Martin Luther King Celebration, Hate Crimes, Healing, and Ecumenical/Interfaith Issues. Preface by Most Rev. George V. Murry. Order from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops at 1-800-235-8722, or at <http://www.usccb.org/publishing/multicultural/index.htm#racism>.

#### *Brothers and Sisters to Us / Nuestros Hermanos y Hermanas*

This is the landmark pastoral letter from the U.S. bishops in which they promote discussion and action against racism, "an evil which endures in our society and in our Church." The English/Spanish edition also includes *For the Love of One Another: A Special Message on the Occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of "Brothers and Sisters to Us."* Order from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops at 1-800-235-8722, <http://www.usccb.org/publishing/multicultural/index.htm#racism>. Read the original letter at <http://www.osjspm.org/cst/racism.htm>.

#### *Beyond Black & White*

By Danny Duncan Collum

Provides an opportunity for small faith-sharing communities to explore what the Catholic faith has to say about the

racial issues facing our society, offering them the opportunity to reach and forge common bonds with people of all races (Six sessions). <http://www.renewintl.org/Resources/Pages/scccatalog.pdf>.

#### *Reconciled Through Christ: On Reconciliation and Greater Collaboration Between Hispanic American Catholics and African American Catholics*

Addressed to those who serve the approximately 20 million Hispanic Catholics and 3 million African American Catholics in this country, this reflection urges a spirit of pastoral collaboration between these diverse groups in order to "enrich the human family and strengthen the human community." The document explores the common challenges of these groups—historical roots, racial backgrounds and experiences, sharing neighborhoods, extended families, limited socioeconomic resources, common spiritual leaders, contemporary moral leaders—and seeks mutual reconciliation in the areas of race and language. Celebrating more than 50 years of community ministry, the Hispanic American and African American bishops join together to recommend ways to move forward at the national, diocesan, and parish levels. English/Spanish edition includes Spanish text on left-hand pages and English text on right-hand pages. Produced by the Committee on African American Catholics and the Committee on Hispanic Affairs, National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Order from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops at 1-800-235-8722, <http://www.usccb.org/publishing/multicultural/african.htm>.

## Further Resources (continued)

### Internet Resources:

“Contribution to the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance,” 2001.

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/justpeace/documents/rc\\_pc\\_justpeace\\_doc\\_20010829\\_comunicato-razzismo\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20010829_comunicato-razzismo_en.html).

“Catholics Should Stand Firm on Affirmative Action”

<http://salt.claretianpubs.org/issues/racism/affirm.html>

An article on reasons to support affirmative action efforts.

“Dear Jack: A Letter Across the Racial Divide”

<http://salt.claretianpubs.org/issues/racism/walton.html>

A reflection on the racial divide in America.

“Racism and Religion: Partners in Crime?”

<http://salt.claretianpubs.org/issues/racism/unsworth.html>

A brief history and reflection on racial attitudes and practices within the Catholic Church in the United States.

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed annually on March 21. For information and links to various resources, see <http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/iderd/>.

The Crosspoint Anti-Racism site claims to link over 2000 organizations in 112 countries. Materials are organized by subject and by country. See <http://www.magenta.nl/crosspoint>.

Pax Christi USA, the national Catholic Peace Movement, has been working on an Anti-Racism Initiative called Brothers and Sisters All. For an introduction to this initiative, an overview of the organizing efforts, and personal reflections from various participants, see [http://www.paxchristiusa.org/news\\_events\\_more.asp?id=41](http://www.paxchristiusa.org/news_events_more.asp?id=41).

The Damascus Road Anti-Racism Process is a training and skill development program designed to dismantle racism within the Anabaptist community. Their site contains articles, anti-racism radio spots, statistics and other helpful resources. For information, see <http://thirdway.com/rad/radcap-art1.shtml>.

“Racial Justice: what you and your parish can do to dismantle racism” This booklet was put together by the Racial Justice Task Force of the diocese of Joliet, Illinois. It is available in PDF format at <http://www.paxjoliet.org/racism.htm>.