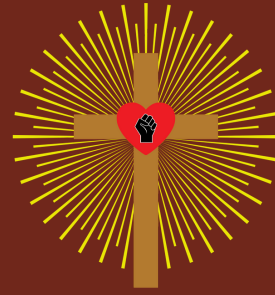


CATHOLIC ANTI-RACISM PROJECT



Lenten Examen and Stations of the Cross to Recognize and Counter Racism

FEBRUARY 17 2021 - APRIL 5 2021



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Developed through a collaboration by the New York City Catholic parishes of St. Charles Borromeo, Resurrection and All Saints, St. Francis de Sales and St. Francis Xavier as part of a grant to promote racial justice among Catholic communities awarded by Catholic Charities. For more information contact:

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INTRODUCTION

Beginning in the Spring 2019, at the invitation of the combined parishes of St. Charles Borromeo, Resurrection and All Saints, the faith communities of St. Francis de Sales and St. Francis Xavier joined in a multi-parish conversation about eradicating systemic racism, white privilege and the evils they perpetuate in the day to day lives of the black and brown people both in the Catholic Church and in our wider communities.

Over time, these parish communities endeavored to find a common language for the different experiences black, brown and white people have of racism, privilege, and implicit and unconscious bias. In spending time together we began to share common events in New York and the broader world: the 2019 New York City blackout, the continuing polarization of American society, the coronavirus pandemic which is devastating communities of color, the death of George Floyd and the growth of the Black Lives Matter movement, the 2020 presidential election and the violence following it. It's fair to say that it has been our collective commitment during these turbulent times have knit us together as the brothers and sisters we are. It is a singular gift.

This Lenten Examen is a fruit of our collaboration. Like all true collaborations, it is comprised of contributions from each community. Underlying each week has been the prayer, "How is God calling me to this chapter of the Examen?" For this reason, no two weeks are exactly the same in format, theme or content. Some weeks may seem to overlap other weeks. These characteristics are part of the gift that is this Examen.

This Examen is adapted from a June 2020 Racial Justice Examen written by Patrick Saint-Jean, SJ. We are grateful to him for permitting us to adapt the Examen. We also are grateful to the Archdiocese of New York, Catholic Charities and especially to Mr. Richard Espinal who encouraged and guided us for their support.





The artwork on the cover and the picture of Black Lives Matter are used here with the permission of the artist, Brother Michael McGrath, OSFS. The cover art is derived from a set of Stations of the Cross Brother created after a trip to Kenya in 2018. When the death of George Floyd occurred, he painted Jesus pinned under the cross with the words of Mr. Floyd. In an article he wrote for America Magazine in November of 2017, Brother McGrath says of his paintings of the Black Madonna, "I find renewed hope and comfort in Mary the Black Madonna. For me, she remains the loving font of wisdom she was to saints such as Francis de Sales and Ignatius Loyola. She is still the source of comfort she has always been for restless pilgrims who have crisscrossed Europe for centuries." She is depicted with angels and the Holy Spirit with the words "Black Lives Matter" above her head.

Brother lives and has his art studio in Camden, NJ.

WHY WE NEED A RACIAL JUSTICE EXAMEN

Written by Patrick Saint-Jean, SJ

June 22, 2020

Racism is a sin that grows year-round in the hearts of many. These seeds, germinating for more than 400 years in hatred and oppression, devastate the Black and Brown communities each time there is a new bloom. America's epidemic of racism is slowly killing the people of God. Fifty states and 18 countries have taken part in protests to raise awareness of this epidemic.

As Christians, we must recognize that we have been living with the sin of racism for four centuries in our church, and in fact, we benefit directly from it. In our political system, too, power is consolidated among white people. White Americans are sheltered and protected by a system of racism and inequality that is inseparable from the laws they create. Racism is bound to the DNA of this country.

The pain and anger of the last few weeks leads us to ask: How can we work toward antiracism in our own hearts, churches and country? Now more than ever, I believe Ignatian spirituality is an important means to help each person who desires to live with justice, dignity and equality seek God in the midst of everything.

Through this examen, we will start the work of antiracism by examining how systemic racism influences our lives and how we practice the sin of racism. In this meditation, we will analyze how our actions and privilege contribute to the destruction of the dignity and humanity of the Black community in the U.S. We ask God to reveal himself and to remove the veils from our eyes that hinder us from fully seeing Black people. Let us open our ears to hear their cries. Let us reflect and bring the fruit of our reflections to God.



HOW TO DO THIS EXAMEN

This booklet sets out seven weeks of prayers to recognize and counter personal and systemic racial injustice. Each week focuses on several Stations of the Cross and offers a reflection, commentary and resources to enrich the Examen.

On seven Monday evenings at 7:00 p.m. (February 22, March 1, March 8, March 15, March 22, March 29, April 5) all participants will gather by Zoom to pray and share together our experience.

Zoom Link - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83903803910?pwd=N3pvVkFkTmZTSHE3eUZMYVdoeFBoZz09>

Meeting ID: 839 0380 3910

Passcode: 325607

Telephone: 646-558-8656



THE EXAMEN

The Examen is a prayer based in the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits. It is a simple, prayerful process that invites one to look at the events of their lives, shining a light on those aspects that are to be celebrated and joyful, and those that may need further attention, and those that may need amends or a change of heart. The prayer ends always with hope—that as we move forward in life, we give thanks for the awareness gained from the prayer and look forward, trusting that God is with us as we continue on our journey. The steps of the Examen are below. This prayer is integrated into the reflection for each week. You should feel free, in course of your prayer time, to add similar questions and prayers.

Examen

1. Become aware of God's presence with you. Ask God for the light to see yourself as God sees you.
2. Begin your time of prayer with gratitude for the many people who have and continue to struggle to bring about racial justice in our country.
3. What words or images came to you as you prayed with the Stations? After watching the video, reading the article, and noting the statistics, how do you feel?
4. Ask yourself: How is compliance, my inaction and my sense of fear directly or indirectly contributing to maintain this structure?
5. Did you feel uncomfortable/caught off guard? What was it that made you feel that way? What notions, beliefs, or past experiences contributed to that feeling?
6. What action might you take?

Thank God for the insights you have gained from this Examen; know that God is with you as you resolve to move forward with your action.



IGNATIAN IMAGINATIVE PRAYER

A way of praying that you may find helpful throughout the weeks is using your imagination. St. Ignatius of Loyola, in his Spiritual Exercises, invites us to place ourselves in the scene of a Scripture passage and to use our five senses. For example, if you are praying with John 13:1-20, Jesus washes the feet of his disciples, imagine you are there. Are you a bystander? Are you one of the disciples? Do you wash feet with Jesus or do you let Jesus wash your feet? Who is there? What do you hear? With whom do you speak or are you silent? What does it feel like to have your feet washed or for you to wash others' feet with Jesus? How does the experience of being "present" in the scene affect you and your prayer? You may want to use this manner of praying if it is helpful for as you journey through these Lenten weeks of prayer.

BREATHING

On the cover of this prayer, there is a picture of Jesus falling beneath the weight of His cross, stating the words we have heard from George Floyd, Eric Gardner and others who have died because of racial injustice, "I can't breathe." We invite you to pay attention to your breath as you begin, are in the midst of, and as you end your prayer. You may want to begin your prayer becoming aware of your breathing. Breathe in God's love and care for you...breathe out any worries, distractions or concerns. You may want to repeat this for as many times as it takes for you to "settle in" to your prayer. We live in a very fast-paced world, and although many of us are at home spending our days going from one Zoom meeting to another, preparing meals, assisting children with school work, attending to a loved one--- all these activities take energy and we may be distracted as our day moves from one event to the next one. . God invites us to slow down our pace and become more aware of moving into our prayer time. Taking deep, slow breaths can help us to enter into our time of prayer.



SEVEN WEEK PROGRAM OUTLINE

Week 1: Awareness of Self. Focus on the presence of God in my life, especially the place of social justice in my life.

First Station: Jesus is Condemned to Death

Second Station: Jesus Carries His Cross

Week 2: Complicity. Falling on My Cross. How do I recognize racism or implicit and unconscious bias in my heart? How have I been complicit in reinforcing racism or implicit and unconscious bias?

Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time

Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Mother

Week 3: Accompaniment in Sorrow. In the context of my faith, how do I experience the oppression – the suffering – of others? In the context of my faith, how do I experience systemic racial oppression?

Fifth Station: Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus to Carry His Cross

Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

Week 4: A Powerless Community in Shock and Grief. What is my experience of stunned communal powerlessness, communal shock and grief? And in the context of systemic racial injustice. What are the racial dynamics in my life? What does it mean to be anti-racist? What does it mean to be/have an ally for racial justice?

Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time

Eighth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

Ninth Station: Jesus Falls the Third Time

Week 5: Walking Through the Valley of Darkness. Experience the night of total desolation, aloneness, humiliation. The racial injustice of lynching, incarceration.

Tenth Station: Jesus' Clothes are Taken Away

Eleventh Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross

Week 6: My Road to Pentecost. Experience what it is to pick up the pieces – for me individually and as part of a community. What are my deepest longings for racial justice?

Thirteenth Station: Jesus' Body is Taken Down From the Cross

Fourteenth Station: Jesus' Body is Laid in the Tomb

Week 7: Resurrection. Walking With the Wind. On the road to Emmaus, what is Jesus calling me to do?



WEEK ONE: AWARENESS OF SELF

First Station: Jesus is Condemned to Death

Second Station: Jesus Carries His Cross

“Pilate then released Barabbas to them; but he had Jesus flogged and then handed him over to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into his residence, the Praetorium, where they collected the whole company around him. They stripped him and dressed him in a scarlet cloak; and plaiting a crown of thorns they placed it on his head, and a stick in his right hand. Falling on their knees before him they jeered at him, “Hail, king of the Jews!” They spat on him and used the stick to beat him about the head. When they had finished mocking him, they stripped off the cloak and dressed him in his own clothes. Then they led him away to be crucified.” Matthew 27: 26-31.

Commentary

Spend some time with Jesus as He experiences these life changing events. Jesus now faces the end of his life. He is forced to carry the cross, the tree onto which He will be nailed and hoisted into the air – the instrument of torture that will cause his death. How many countless others have known the same terror, the same hopelessness as they faced a tortured death. My personal awareness of history, the forces that bring about such terror, the compulsion of people to exert power over the powerless is what I sit with this week.

Reflection (You can use this or use the Examen form on page 6)

- Focus on the presence of God in my life - the presence of God as I experience social justice.
- Ponder Pilate. The people who flogged Jesus. The soldier who stripped off Jesus' clothes. The person who plaited the crown of thorns. The person who spat on Jesus. The person who beat him on the head that already throbbed with thorns.
- What images or thought arise as you pray with these two Stations?
- What are the similar scenes we see today on the news? And on YouTube that can be replayed over and over? Where do we recognize racism, white privilege, unconscious bias?

Resources Before Praying the Examen

To personally become aware of - to recognize - the evils of racism and white privilege begin with **DEFINITIONS:**

(cont.)



Construct of Racism Contextualized - <https://youtu.be/KCxNjdewAAA> (9min - 12:52)

Understanding Structural Racism - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=711hKrPnpg4>

Systemic Racism - <https://youtu.be/DBxfnXql0oo>

White Privilege - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2klmWo0Madw>, Perspective from white woman married to a black man with two biracial sons.

Anti-Racist - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qw3DjP7HSts> (Anti-Racist Baby)

Bryan Stevenson, the founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, is an African American lawyer who has spent his career assisting those who are unjustly incarcerated to receive justice.

Interview - <https://www.pbs.org/video/bryanstevenson-acdjum/>

Article - <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/why-massincarceration-defines-us-as-a-society-135793245/#.UKwDspaG6uk.twitter>

Book: *Just Mercy*

Inside Voices: KJ Story - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DybXgl3wZDc>

According to www.sentencingproject.org, per 100,000, in New York State, the incarcerated rates as of 2015 are, for men and women: Black: 896; Latinx: 351; White: 112.

Pray the Examen on Page 6.

WEEK TWO: COMPLICITY. FALLING ON MY CROSS

Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time

Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Mother

Third Station: Jesus Falls the First Time

“Christ Jesus was in the form of God; yet he laid no claim to equality with God, but made himself nothing, assuming the form of a slave. Bearing the human likeness, sharing the human lot, he humbled himself, and was obedient. Even to the point of death, death on the cross.” Phil. 2:6-8.

Commentary

Who is this Jesus? Dark-skinned, scourged, staggering under the weight of a tree, hungry, tired, suffering physically and emotionally...?

Who is this Jesus? He is every oppressed, humiliated, tortured person. He is every scapegoated, unjustly accused person. He is every person institutions of authority have murdered. He is every person who has been denied the human dignity with which they were created.

Reflection

As I look – intently look – at Jesus, I am compelled to ask myself how I have contributed to the oppression of people who appear different from me? How have I averted my eyes from incarceration, housing, job, education injustices meted out to people of color? How have I flinched and remained silent rather than name the sin that is racism when I see it? How have I failed to alleviate these injustices? How have I rejected Jesus who I am looking at as he fell carrying the cross.

Fourth Station: Jesus Meets His Mother

“The shepherds hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw the child, they related what they had been told about him; and all who heard were astonished as what the shepherds said. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered over them.” Luke 2: 16 – 19.

(cont.)



Commentary

Who is this Mary, mother of Jesus? Herself dark-skinned, voiceless, nearly invisible as she pushed into the crowd to see her first-born child tortured on the way to his death? Mary is the Mother of Jesus, and our Mother too.

Sr. Thea Bowman, (1937-1989) who is being considered for Canonization in the Catholic Church, sings plaintively that as Black Catholics, we "...sometimes feel like a motherless child" within the structure of the Catholic Church; she affirms our culture, faith, and significance in her address to the U.S. Bishops (see below).

Who is this Mary? She is every mother who has held her infant fleeing oppressors that will kill the child in spirit if not in body. She is every mother who has visited a prison, or a morgue. She is every mother who has rocked a child to sleep with an empty stomach or no shelter.

Who is this Jesus? He is every son and daughter in the face death looking directly into the eye and heart of the mother who gave him life. With love beyond all telling.

Reflection

As I look – intently look – at mother and son, I am compelled to ask myself how have I contributed, or failed to alleviate, the suffering of a mother and her child? How have I crossed the street to avoid eye contact with a young man of color? How have I crossed the street to avoid a person asking for money for a meal, shelter? How have I explicitly or in my heart blamed that person for the predicament they are in? How have I personally helped mothers, sons and daughters crushed by the oppression of their daily lives?

Resources Before Praying the Examen

PATH 1: The Sin of Racism

- Sr. Thea Bowman, Video address to U.S. Bishops, June 1989 - <https://youtu.be/uOV0nQkjuoA>
- *Nothing to Add: A Challenge to White Silence in Racial Discussions* - [Nothing-to-AddPublished.pdf](#) (robindiangelo.com)
- Robin DiAngelo on White Privilege - <https://youtu.be/KCxNjdewAAA> (0:00 -9:00)
- *The Assumptions of White Privilege and What We Can Do About It* by Bryan N. Massingale - <https://www.ncronline.org>

(cont.)



- <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/dave-chappelle-on-comedy-in-the-metoo-moment-were-all-figuring-this-out> (4min - end)

Path 2: Immoral vs Misguided Intentionality

- Read *Matthew 13:24-43*, The parable of the weeds
- Reflect on the portion of the parable where Jesus explains the parable. (vs. 36-43.) that says How do you interpret the “children of the Kingdom” vs. “the children of the evil one? “What might Jesus be inviting you to consider for yourself here?
- Recall a moment when you realized that what you thought was “good” or otherwise served to advance racial equality was interfered with by one with seemingly malintentions.
- How were you, or someone you loved, or something you believed in; hurt or derailed by the by the intervener.
- Reflect on the portion of the parable that suggests pulling out the weeds of the “evil man” to rid the weeds of its evil nature.
- The parable says to wait until harvest and then separate the good at the bad. This takes patience and attention to process. Who/what does the parable’s evil man represent in the conversation about racism? Who/what do those weeds represent in the conversation about racism?
- How can good wheat and bad wheat be so intricately related? How is it if I pull out the bad wheat, it might also affect the good wheat? What am I to do then?
- Reflect on the good that you contribute to those around you. Think critically about the ways one of your actions did some harm to others, even and especially, unintended harm. How might those lessons help you empathize with those who may, unintentionally or intentionally, propagate aspects of racism?
- What does it mean to separate the bad wheat (racism) from the good wheat after harvest, verses “burning the wheats” of racism - eradication through burning, which may feel like our natural reaction to the presence of evil as Catholics.
- <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/dave-chappelle-on-comedy-in-the-metoo-moment-were-all-figuring-this-out> (4min - end).

Pray the Examen on Page 6.



WEEK THREE: ACCOMPANIMENT IN SORROW

Fifth Station: Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus to Carry His Cross

Sixth Station: Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

“As they led him away to execution, they took hold of a man called Simon, from Cyrene, on his way in from the country; putting the cross on his back they made him carry it behind Jesus.” Luke 23: 26.

Veronica is believed to be the woman who touched Jesus’ hem in Luke’s gospel. “While Jesus was on his way he could hardly breathe for the crowds. Among them was a woman who had suffered from hemorrhages for twelve years; and nobody had been able to cure her. She came up from behind and touched the edge of his cloak, and at once her hemorrhage stopped. Jesus said, “Who was it who touched me?” All disclaimed it, and Peter said, ‘Master, the crowds are hemming you in and pressing upon you.’ But Jesus said, ‘Someone did touch me, for I felt that power had gone out from me.’ Then the woman, see that she had been detected, came trembling and fell at his feet. Before all the people she explained why she had touched him and how she had been cured instantly. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.” Luke 8: 43-48.

Commentary

“Certainly, Jesus, it pains you to see your mother suffer in this way. But you must make her a part of this tremendous divine drama. For such is God’s plan for the salvation of the human race.”

Consider Simon’s compassion. Jesus was weak and weary – near death. Simon was forced to carry the cross because his executioners feared Jesus would die before he could be nailed to the cross.

Consider Veronica’s compassion. Seeing Jesus in such distress, his face bathed in sweat and blood, Veronica gave Jesus her veil. Jesus wiped his face and left upon the cloth – in sweat and blood - the imprint of his face.

Both Simon and Veronica, recognizing both their own and Jesus’s humanity, braved the raucous crowd and armed soldiers to reach out to Jesus. Their actions endangered themselves and demonstrated solidarity with Jesus. What did they feel in those moments? Sorrow? Fear? Bitterness? Humiliation? How did they feel in the months and years that followed?



Reflection

- Fr. James Keenan, SJ says, “Mercy is the willingness to step into the chaos of another.” Has someone ever stepped into my chaos to offer me compassion and mercy? Have I ever stepped into the chaos of another to offer compassion and mercy?
- Stepping into the chaos of another, accompanying them in their sorrow, acting in solidarity with them is being an ally. What is it to have compassion – to be an ally – in a racial context?
- What action must I take so my solidarity with, and being an ally to, marginalized people is more than “lip service”?
- What does it mean to have an ally? What is my responsibility to help other people become allies? How do I continue to find the strength, compassion and mercy to enter into the chaos to undo racism when the people and institutions around me seem to make the same mistakes that reenforce racism time and time again?

Resources

- Watch this short TED talk by Graciela Mohamedi, an activist, who encourages white people to become allies - https://youtu.be/d2qAbp-t_FY
- *Letter from Birmingham Jail* by Martin Luther King, Jr. - https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/sites/mlk/files/letterfrombirmingham_wwcw_0.pdf
- The difference between being ‘not racist’ and ‘anti-racist’ interview with Ibram X. Kendi - <https://youtu.be/KCxbI5QgFZw>

Pray the Examen on Page 6.



WEEK FOUR: A POWERLESS COMMUNITY IN SHOCK AND GRIEF

Seventh Station: Jesus Falls the Second Time

Eighth Station: Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

Ninth Station: Jesus Falls the Third Time

“Great numbers of people followed, among them many women who mourned and lamented over him. Jesus turned to them and said, ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and your children. For the days are surely coming when people will say, ‘Happy are the barren, the wombs that never bore a child, the breasts that never fed one.’ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ For if these things are done with the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?’” Luke 23: 27.

Commentary

Jerusalem just before the beginning of Passover is teeming with people. As they rushed to make preparations for the feast, women and men are drawn to the sounds and tension of a growing group of people. Armed soldiers clanging their swords and armor, loud jeering intermingled with keening cries of sorrow, Jesus moaning with each fall. Simon of Cyrene straining under the cross he dragged for Jesus. A spectacle of death that froze people in their steps whether they were close by or in the distance.

Many in the crowd were women, the givers and nurturers of life. Jesus speaks to their grief. He speaks in terms of communal grief to the daughters of Jerusalem. He speaks to communal powerlessness in the face of oppression and unjust suffering. The universe joins in the lamentation of the community that is powerless. Mountains fall and hills roll onto those who grieve.

Reflection

- Reflect on how institutional, system racism and the oppression of communal powerlessness affects black and brown people? What have I done in the face of that oppression? How have I participated in the spectacle that is racism in America? What am I prepared to do going forward?
- Reflect on how oppressed communities find the strength to stand up amidst their lamentation and carry on? How have I experienced the sorrows of the Daughters of Jerusalem?

(cont.)



- For whom have I wept who has succumbed to the sin of racism? Why? Why Should we weep for those individuals and the causes they represent?
- What are the racial dynamics in my life? What does it mean to be anti-racist? What does it mean to be/have an ally for racial justice?

Resources

- Call to the Civil rights movement (reference to abused individuals working on behalf of justice) Dr. King's speech in Montgomery Alabama - <https://youtu.be/CBm48Scju9E>
- Finding Caesar Chavez - https://youtu.be/gN_AqO6SvAU
- Family of George Floyd - <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/watch-george-floydsfamily-on-what-those-officers-took-from-us>
- Honoring Breonna Taylor - <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/a-brief-but-spectaculartake-on-honoring-breonna-taylor>

Pray the Examen on Page 6.



WEEK FIVE: WALKING THROUGH THE VALLEY OF DEEPEST DARKNESS

Tenth Station: Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

Eleventh Station: Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross

“They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha, which means ‘Place of a Skull’, and they offered him drugged wine, but he did not take it. Then they fastened him to the cross. They shared out his clothes, casting lots to decide what each should have.

It was nine in the morning when they crucified him, and the inscription giving the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews”. Two robbers were crucified with him, on his right and the other on his left.

The passers-by wagged their heads and jeered at him: ‘Bravo!’, they cried, ‘So you are the man who was to pull down the temple, and rebuild it in three days! Save yourself and come down from the cross.’ The chief priests and scribes joined in, jesting with one another: ‘He saved others,’ they said, ‘but he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the king of Israel, come down now from the cross. If we see that, we shall believe.’ Even those who were crucified with him taunted him.

At midday, a darkness fell over the whole land, which lasted till three in the afternoon; and at three Jesus cried aloud, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?’ which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ Hearing this, some of the bystanders said, ‘Listen! He is calling Elijah.’ Someone ran and soaked a sponge in sour wine and held it to his lips on the end of a stick. ‘Let us see if Elijah will come to take him down.’ Then Jesus gave a loud cry and died.” Mark 15:22-37.

Commentary

For a third time, Jesus falls. Legs, arms, hands, shoulder lacerated from the tree that is his cross. Jeered, mocked, beaten as he passes a crowd growing bigger, louder and out of control. Stripped of his clothes, the guards strip Jesus of his human dignity. Humiliate him in nakedness. Why?

Nailed to the cross. Skin pierced. Sensitive hands and feet shattered. Gravity tugging. Heat and crowd noise assaulting the senses. The final convulsions of heart, lungs, brain that can no longer withstand the physical punishment. Jesus’ total abandonment in the final throes of life into death.

(cont.)



How many have shared such a torturous death? Because of their skin color, ancestry, appearance? How many enslaved Americans have fallen for the third time, died stripped of their clothes, on a tree? How many peoples – children, men, women - within the past 100 years have been brutally murdered by oppressors to maintain power that one person was never supposed to exercise over another?

Reflection

- How have I stripped others of their dignity? Of housing, education, jobs, food by not protecting their humanity. How like the guards who cast lots for Jesus' cloak have I looked to have more than I need – at the expense of others.
- What am I going to do about present day oppression – oppression unto death?
- Jesus - today - instills in all people, and especially youth, a deep desire to make a difference in the world no matter what the cost. Let us pray that the courageous example of modern martyrs inspires each of us - brothers and sisters - to meet all challenges with faith, hope and love. Fill us with Your presence and the grace to respond to the call to “go out to all the world.”

Resources

- Hymn: “Were You There When They Crucified My Lord” - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRaFdFkOVyY>
 - Verse 1: Were you there when they crucified My Lord (repeat)
Oh, Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
 - Verse 2: Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
 - Verse 3: Were you there when they rolled the stone away?
- The National Memorial for Peace and Justice and The Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration - <https://museumandmemorial.eji.org/memorial>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-0FGYdTR7g>
- List of 20th Century Genocides
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_genocides_by_death_toll
<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/pol116/genocides.htm>
- Navajo reservation residents lacking running water - <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/how-off-the-grid-navajo-residents-are-gettingrunning-water>

(cont.)



- Ashton Mota on the “Yes for 3” campaign (video at bottom of the page)
<https://www.intomore.com/fall-issue/massachusetts-affirmed-my-humanity-as-black-latinx-trans-teen/>
- Black students discuss race and being underestimated -
<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/two-students-brief-but-spectacular-takes-on-raceand-being-underestimated>

Pray the Examen on Page 6.



WEEK SIX: MY ROAD TO PENTECOST

Thirteenth Station: Jesus' Body is Take Down From the Cross

Fourteenth Station: Jesus' Body is Laid in the Tomb

Thirteenth Station: Jesus' Body is Take Down From the Cross

"Unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat. But if it dies, it bears much fruit" (Jn. 12:24).

Commentary

Jesus is dead. His body hangs on the cross, limp and lifeless, until at last it is taken down and placed in the lap of his mother. The image of this is a call to all the mothers that are forced to grieve for the lives of their sons and daughters that have been cut tragically short. What a blessing and curse it is to return to those loving arms. How great is God that he died for all of us to be saved.

Like Mary, the moms of the children have no control over the actions that have lead them to this place, but they must still give their children the same love and care that they did from infancy up to the moments of their passing. The imagery of them coming into the world and leaving in their mother arms creates a dual emotion of love and sorrow. Despite this, the good news is that good people never really leave us, instead their spirit surround everyone and everything that they have touched. That influence continues to live on in all of us.

Reflection

- Take a moment to recall images of sons and daughters stripped away from their mothers – which would then become a public spectacle.
- Whose faces do you imagine? What do they look like?
- How might the grieving mothers of those children bear similarities to Mary as she grieves over her son's public execution.

Resources

- Read *1 Kings* 3:16-27.
- Consider the devastation of these parents:
 - Missing black girls in DC spark outrage, prompt calls for federal help - <https://www.cnn.com/2017/03/24/us/missing-black-girls-washingtondc/index.html> (Video)

(cont.)



Do you recognize this image?



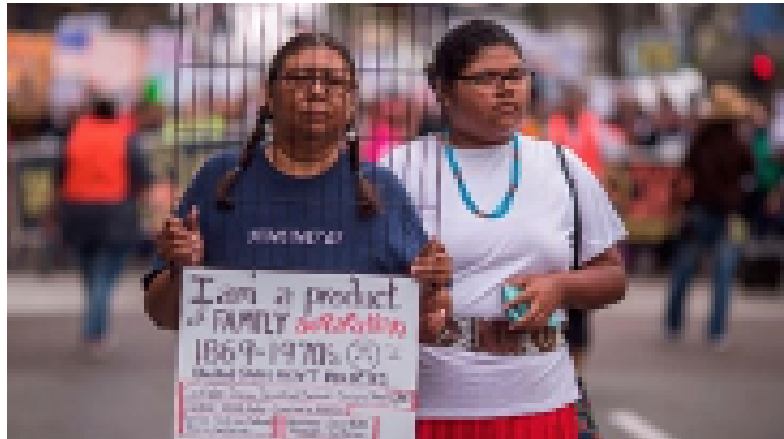
- Separated: Children at the Border - <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/separated-children-at-the-border/> (35min - 41min)

Do you recognize these image?



- New York City Confronts Massive Overrepresentation of Black Children in Foster Care - <https://imprintnews.org/featured/new-york-city-de-blasio-black-foster-care/33992>

Do you recall this image?



- Bryan Stevenson: We Need to Talk about an Injustice - https://www.ted.com/talks/bryan_stevenson_we_need_to_talk_about_an_injustice?language=en
- Kimberle Crenshaw: The Urgency of Intersectionality - https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?language=en

Prayer 1: Jesus, as teachers and students we sometimes face challenges that leave us at a loss. We worry that it is beyond our power to make a difference for our loved ones. Show us the example of your Blessed Mother, and teach us that when we can think of nothing else to do, we can hold fast to you, and you will always lead us forward. Let her strength and grace live in our hearts, and guide us in our comings and goings. When the burden is too heavy for us alone, wrapped your loving arms around us so that we may feel your presence.

Prayer 2: Do you have the picture of a loved one who has passed on in faith that you want to bring to this week's prayer? Who is it? How have they impacted your life? What gifts have they shared with you? How do you remember them? How might God speak to you in your prayer through them? Perhaps you have the picture of a loved one who has died because of a racially unjust situation. You may want to pray with their picture.

Fourteenth Station: Jesus' Body is Laid in the Tomb

"And when it had already become late, since it was Preparation Day, which is the day before the Sabbath, there came Joseph, the one from Arimathea. He was a reputable Councilor; and he was also waiting for the Kingdom of God. He was daring enough to go to Pilate and ask for the body of Jesus. And Pilate wondered if he was already dead (or: was surprised that he should be already dead). And he summoned the centurion and asked if he was long dead. And when he had confirmation from the centurion, he gifted the corpse to Joseph. And he bought a linen cloth and took him down and wrapped him in the linen cloth and placed him in a tomb which was hewn out of rock. And he rolled a stone onto the door of the tomb." (Mark 15:42-47)

Commentary

As Catholics, because we know the end of the story, we often fail to grasp the gravity of this moment. With so much to distract us in our busy lives and with Easter around the corner, it's easy for us to find ourselves eager to turn our attention to what's next. However, arguably no moment in our Christian story deserves attention more than this one. Now, our hero, who had power over disease, demons, and even death, lies powerless in his tomb. Is it true? The promise of Kingdom of God gone with our supposed savior succumbed to the great equalizer like all others before him?

Reflection

- "Love covers over a multitude of sins."
- Think back to the images of families you recalled earlier.
- Was there an action of love that was derived from or in response to the tragedies those images represent?
- How do I define an Action of Love? How does my definition seek to advance love and racial equality?
- This week commit to an anti-racist action of love.
- Write down some of your thoughts here. What does it feel like to experience, after reading or listening to some of the interviews of family members above "picking up the pieces" individually and as part of a community after a tragedy? I ask myself, "What are my deepest longings for racial justice? "





Resources

- Listen to the 4-minute interview of Emerald Garner - <https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2020/05/27/eric-garner-george-floyd-unarmed-blackmen>
- Meet Lezley McSpadden - <https://www.stlmag.com/longform/remembering-michaelbrown/>
- Meet Sybrina Fulton - <https://www.npr.org/sections/live-updates-protests-for-racialjustice/2020/06/11/874683557/trayvon-martins-mother-sybrina-fulton-qualifies-to-run-for-office-in-florida>
- Meet Jaime Guttenberg - <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/politicsgovernment/article245560580.html>
- Meet Wanda Johnson - <https://www.kqed.org/news/11639679/nine-years-after-oscar-grants-death-his-mother-continues-to-speak-out>
- Read *1 Peter* 4:7-11

Pray the Examen on Page 6.



WEEK SEVEN: RESURRECTION

“That same day two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, talking together about all that had happened. As they talked and argued, Jesus himself came up and walked with them; but something prevented them from recognizing him. He asked them, “What is it you are debating as you walk?” They stood still, their faces full of sadness, and one, called Clopas, answered, “Are you the only person staying in Jerusalem not to have heard the news of what happened there in the last few days?” “What news?”, he said. “About Jesus of Nazareth, they replied, “who, by deeds and words of power, proved himself a prophet in the sight of God and the whole people; and how our chief priests and rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and crucified him. But we had been hoping he was to be the liberator of Israel. What is more, this is the third day since it happened, and now some women of our company have astounded us: they went early to the tomb, but failed to find his body, and returned with a story that they had seen a vision of angels who told them he was alive. Then some of our people went to the tomb and things just as the women had said; but him they did not see.

How dull you are!” he answered. “How slow to believe all that the prophets said! Was not the Messiah bound to suffer in this way before entering upon his glory?” Then starting from Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them the whole of scripture the things that referred to himself.

By this time they had reached the village to which they were going, and he made as if continuing his journey. But they pressed him: “Stay with us, for evening approaches, and the day is almost over. So he went in to stay with them. And when he had sat down with them at table, he took bread and said the blessing; he broke the bread and offered it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; but he vanished from their sight. They said to one another, “Were not our hearts on fire as he talked with us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?”

Without a moment’s delay they set out and returned to Jerusalem. There they found that the eleven and the rest of the company had assembled, and were saying, “It is true: the Lord has risen; he has appeared to Simon. Then they described that had happened on their journey and told how he had made himself known to them in the breaking of the bread.” Luke 24:13-35.



Reflection

- Jesus meets the disciples where they are—wondering, saddened, and perhaps confused about the events of His death. Jesus, like a good teacher, instructs them about His life and all they need to know about His death and resurrection. Then, He stays with them and shares a meal with the disciples—and their eyes were opened to the identity of Jesus.
- Jesus helped the disciples to become more aware of themselves and of Him.
- How have your eyes been opened to the sin of racism during these Lenten weeks of prayer?
- The disciples said, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?” How has God spoken to you during this Lenten journey?
- Who are the nurturing figures in your life? Name three of them. How have they assisted you in becoming the person you are today? What qualities have they taught you or are presently teaching you? What is Jesus on the road to Emmaus calling me to do?

Resources

- Finding Joy - <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/beyond-the-canvas-episode-3finding-joy>
- A story of selflessness - <https://youtu.be/miA5bX-AmHE>
- New Citizens - <https://youtu.be/JHyNnRy3kfY>
- Krista Tippett interviews with John Lewis
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPwHggvIpiw> (2013)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5GBLVYgE_k (2019)
- *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement* by John Lewis (1998)
- *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration* by Isabel Wilkerson (2010)
- *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson (2020)
- *Stamped From the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* by Ibram X. Kendi (2016)
- *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church* by Fr. Bryan Massingale (2010)
- *Black Priest White Church* by Fr. Lawrence Lucas (1989)
- *White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son* by Tim Wise - <https://www.amazon.com/White-Like-Me-Reflections-Privileged/dp/1593764251>

