

The Passionist Family Reflects on Racial Justice

"Our Passionist brother Thomas Berry reminds us that we are all part of one story, one story through time and space, one story that we are co-creating with God in every moment, with every thought and action.

And for me this story includes me rounding the corner on my bike as I ride home from work to see my son, my black son, up against a police car. He and his friends are spread eagle in the flashing lights of four police cars. When I stopped to inquire of the policeman holding the perimeter he said simply, "they met the description".

Now I don't pretend to know what it is to be a black mother of black sons. I

know only what it is to be a white mother of black sons...

[Read "The Kingdom is at hand" by Lissa Romell, Passionist Solidarity Network Advisory Board.](#)

Masthead image: The completed "Black Lives Matter" mural on Hamilton Avenue across Palo Alto City Hall, by a collaboration of 16 artists (each artist was assigned one letter). Courtesy Benny Villareal.

"F reedom Road has one very clear destination point that calls for Confession by members of the white race. Today's confession is inspired by the writings of James Baldwin, African American author, and Malebo Sephodi, South African writer and poet.

[Read "Freedom Road where The Cross Matters"© Rev. Jim Ryan, PhD Co-pastor of Mary of Magdala, Apostle to the Apostles Community. Independence, Juneteenth to July 4, 2020](#)

"G eorge, we are a religious community that is committed to remembering what was done to Jesus by the authorities of his day. We take a sacred vow to carry the memory of the willful crucifixion of Jesus by those who had the power to do it. They strategically chose to murder him and used the weapons of the state to carry out their goal of violent coercion to silence the voice and vision of the Just One. Some murdered him, George, but far more just watched or fled.

[Read "An Open Letter from the Passionists to George Floyd, Deceased", V. Rev. James O'Shea, CP Provincial](#)

"T his is the proverbial knee on the neck of our Black and Brown brothers and sisters. Yes, it is so ingrained in me that I resist, deny, deflect, excuse this mindset. It is my comfort, my security. It is so ingrained that I am unable to see, or feel, what I call the "second nature of belittlement" that effects every person of color in the most subtle, invasive and debilitating manner. I have always lived in the protective bubble of

privilege to the extent that I can in no way have a sense of this burden of belittlement.

[Read Salvation History Unfolding Right In Our Midst? by Fr. Alex Steinmiller CP](#)

"We recognize, as white folks, that we are a stiff-necked people. The conversation about racial injustice has been going on for years, yet the underlying problem has not substantially changed. It seems to be getting worse. The time to dismantle racism and end white privilege is long overdue. The Scripture admonishes us to repent, to ask forgiveness, and to make reparation. We must assume the moral responsibility to examine our own complicity in social inequality. We can and should look within our own hearts and root out racism and discrimination whenever they arise. We can also unveil white privilege and forgo the benefits it provides us, but excludes others.

[Read "Homily for Trinity Sunday, June 7, 2020", Fr. Joe Mitchell CP](#)

"Solidarity and compassion will take different forms for each one of us. Those of us who are white must assume the moral responsibility to examine our own complicity in social inequality. We must strive to unveil and forgo the benefits of white privilege that only some can access. As allies of the black community, we stand with our black sisters and brothers by raising our voices against racial injustice and white supremacy when we hear statements that are subtly or blatantly racist, bigoted, and divisive.

[Read Statement by the Board and Staff of the Passionist Earth & Spirit Center, "Racism, Racial Equity, and White Privilege," June 2, 2020](#)

I grew up in a Detroit suburb in the 1950's and 1960's, in all white neighborhoods, schools, and churches. I never saw a person of color until my mother took me Christmas shopping in Detroit when I was in grammar school, and I stared at a little Black girl about my age. My mother explained to me that is a "colored person".

For many white people like myself, the call to racial justice has been a

lifelong call to conversion...

[Read "Racial Justice: A Journey of Conversion, by Patty Gillis,, former Board Member of St. Paul of the Cross Passionist Retreat Center in Detroit, and member of Holy Cross Laudato Si Vision Fullfillment team](#)

"How do we correct the mistakes of the past?

We start by listening to one another. Listening with love means fear and bigotry crumble.

We see the face of God in one another.

We stand with each other to support mixed income, inclusive, housing across our city, a living wage and healthcare for all, outstanding public schools in struggling black neighborhoods, business investments in the West End and Newburg. [Louisville neighborhoods]

Will we get out of our comfortable Catholic Caucasian circles, promote social justice and grow in our appreciation of our city's diversity? Or will history repeat itself?

[Read "The Catholic Church's Racism in Louisville," by Jim Wayne, member of The Passionist Solidarity Network Advisory Board](#)

Other Catholic Voices



[The assumptions of white privilege and what we can do about it](#), by

Fr. Bryan N. Massingale, theology professor at Fordham University

- Download this [resource from the Leadership Conference of Women Religious: I Can't Breathe!](#)



- JustFaith creates programs for faithful people looking to deepen their commitment to care for vulnerable people and our planet. You are encouraged to look into their [Faith and Racial Justice series](#).
 - [Statement of the National Black Sisters Conference](#)
 - [Racial justice resources from the Ignatian Solidarity Network](#) including "Racism is a Sin" yard sign pictured above
 - [Pax Christi USA Statement on the Death of George Floyd and the Racism That Seeds Terror and Disfigures our Humanity.](#)
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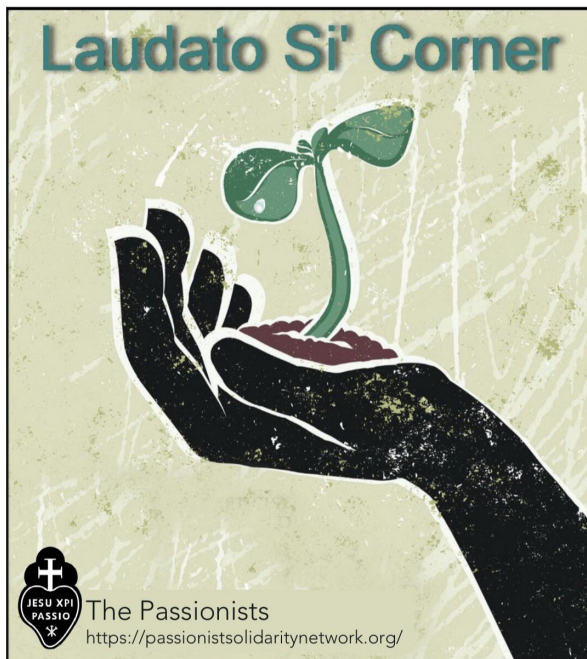
Black Lives Matter - Worldwide

There have been 4000 protests since May 25 worldwide to support Black Lives Matter. They've been happening every day for weeks after the police killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and other cases happening every day. To help give some perspective on the scope of the demonstrations, Alex Smith, a geographic information systems analyst in Tuscon, Arizona created an online map that shows the many cities worldwide standing up for racial justice.

[See the map here](#)

Laudato Si' Corner

Today, however, we have to realize that a true ecological approach *always* becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of



justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor..* -Laudato Sí, #49

Pope Francis addresses Laudato Si' to "every person living on this planet" (§3) and outlines the encyclical in such a way that it gives very clear instructions that we are to DO something.

The Challenge:

- When have you felt sidelined, bypassed, overlooked?
- When were your eyes first opened to racial inequality?
- What have you found or are finding healing in our racist society?

from [JustFaith Ministries Faith and Race programs](#)

Want a deeper dive? Try one of these resources:

- ***White Fragility*** by Robin Diangelo
- ***So You Want to Talk About Race*** by Ijeoma Oluo
- ***How to Be an Antiracist*** by Ibram X. Kendi

How is your community holding up in response to the pandemic? How are you staying safe and healthy? What unique challenges are facing you?

What are you finding you can do to support your surrounding communities? What is inspiring you in these times that effects the entire Passionist Family and our world so much? Contact me, David Horvath, and share your experiences. My email is [jcup@passionist.org](mailto:jcip@passionist.org).

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