



Reflection: Racial Tolerance

Unfortunately, racial intolerance and tensions exist in all countries around the world. In the past week we have seen this highlighted in America.

Church teachings such as *Gaudium et Spes* encourage Catholics to not accept intolerance or discrimination, ‘any kind of social or cultural discrimination in basic personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, colour, social conditions, language or religion, must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design. (*“The Church in the Modern World”*), *Vatican II, 1965, #29.*

Pope Francis constantly speaks on racism, xenophobia, stereotypes and diversity around the world.

In Rome in 2013 Pope Francis said:

“Today I wish to emphasize that the problem of intolerance must be confronted in all its forms: wherever any minority is persecuted and marginalized because of its religious convictions or ethnic identity, the wellbeing of society as a whole is endangered and each one of us must feel affected.”



“With particular sadness I think of the sufferings, the marginalization and the very real persecutions which undergoing in various countries. Let us combine our efforts in promoting a culture of encounter, respect, understanding and mutual forgiveness.”

When the World Cup kicked off in June 2014, many sports fans focused exclusively on whether their favourite teams would advance in the football tournament, but Pope Francis offered a different viewpoint on the games. Before the opening match between Brazil and Croatia, Francis said that the World Cup could teach the public a great deal about solidarity,

teamwork and honouring opponents. “To win, we must overcome individualism, selfishness, all forms of racism, intolerance and manipulation of people,” he said. One cannot be a self-centered player and experience success, he said. “Let nobody turn their back on society and feel excluded!” he said. “No to segregation! No to racism!”

Pope Francis emphasises the need to accept differences. “The most effective antidote to every form of violence is education about discovering and accepting difference as richness and fertility,”

Jesus lived a life of tolerance, acceptance and love for all – He taught the Greatest commandment to ‘love God and love your neighbour’.

The parable of the Good Samaritan was intentionally about race. This story would have been nothing short of scandalous to the first-century Jewish crowd. The lawyer hoped he could fulfil the command to “love his neighbour” by caring exclusively for other Jews, and Jesus would not have it. Jesus’s story demonstrated that love for our neighbour should transcend all racial, national, social, and economic boundaries. Jesus uses the Good Samaritan parable to reshape our worldview. Moreover, the narrative is a Christian call to action. The priest and the Levite may have felt compassion for the man on the road, but they did nothing. The Samaritan, though, not only felt compassion but physically helped the victim. This fact has real implications for our 21st Century lives. Today, people are inundated with stories of persistent racism, economic inequality, and xenophobic narratives that lead to intense feelings of compassion for those hurting groups. When Christians feel compassion for the suffering and marginalized but do nothing, they are acting more like the Levite and the Priest. According to Jesus, Christians are called to behave differently. To show love for all people through actions that reflect compassion and generosity. Christians have a duty to actively work to bring harmony within our communities and to promote tolerance for all.



We pray together:

Creator of all people, in our amazing diversity of size, shape, colour, and giftedness: guide us, by your grace, to recognize the beauty and fitness of all whom you have made in your own image.

Give us gifts of humility and generosity of spirit to recognize in all people, the face of our Saviour, Jesus, and to practice his commandment to “love one another,” toward the end of bringing harmony and peace among persons of all colours, origins, and abilities, for the sake of your Kingdom.



Jesus didn't sit by and allow injustice or discrimination. His sermon on the mount encourages Christian actions of being a comforter, pure in heart (have pure good intentions), to stand up for righteousness, to forgive and show compassion, to bring peace (Beatitudes Matthew 5)

THE EIGHT BEATITUDES OF JESUS

"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn,
for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,
for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for
righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful,
for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure of heart,
for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of
righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5:3-10

Lord Jesus Saves †

We pray that people around the world can work towards these qualities together bringing love, forgiveness and acceptance to all people.

We pray that everyone's uniqueness, culture and identity can be respected and welcomed by all societies.

We ask the Holy Spirit to be we us and others in developing a more tolerant, peaceful society.