

A Question of White Supremacy and Racism?

Immigrant Justice Resource and Discussion Guide



This meeting kit is adapted from the resource and discussion guide provided by MSJC for use by Marianist communities (lay or religious) and parish groups who seek a deeper understanding and prayerful response to issues related to immigration justice in light of Catholic Social Teaching and the Marianist charism.

Introduction

There are five meeting kits dealing with Immigrant Justice, each of which is designed to be used for one evening. Choose one that seems most relevant or useful for your group and focus on that one at your meeting. All of the Immigrant Justice meeting kits use the same opening and closing prayers.

OPENING PRAYER

Blessed are you, O God, creator of all that is. While most of us live in safe homes with at least the basic necessities of life, we know that not everyone does. Those who suffer from inadequate income, food, or safety because of the color of their skin or the country

where they live are our neighbors. They may not live next door, but Jesus reminds us that even the stranger is our neighbor. Help us to be generous and welcoming as You have been to us. Show us how. Amen.

Food for Thought

Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso issued a pastoral letter titled “Night Will Be No More” (<https://www.hopeborder.org/nightwillbenomore-eng>) in response to the mass shooting at a Walmart in El Paso. The gunman targeted Latinos and left at least 23 dead and 23 injured. Some who were injured fled the scene for fear of being caught without valid documentation recognized by the government of the US.

Quotes from “Night Will Be No More”

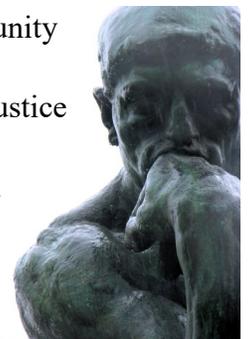
(Have participants silently read one part at a time. Then after a pause, discuss the questions as a group.)

Part 1

4. After prayer and speaking with the People of God in the Church of El Paso, I have decided to write this letter on the theme of racism and white supremacy to reflect together on the evil that robbed us of 23 lives.

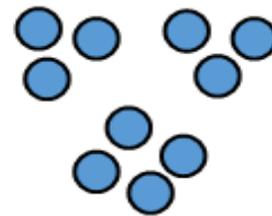
God can only be calling our community to greater fidelity. Together we are called to discern the new paths of justice and mercy required of us and to rediscover our reasons for hope (cf. 1 Peter 3, 5).

12. This mystery of evil also includes the base belief that some of us are more important, deserving, and worthy than others. It includes the ugly conviction that this country and its history and opportunities and resources, as well as our economic and political life, belong more properly to “white” people than to people of color. This is a perverse way of thinking that divides people based on heritage and tone of skin into “us” and “them,” “worthy” and “unworthy,” paving the way to dehumanization. In other words, racism.



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Have you personally linked the issues surrounding the current migration of Central Americans with racism? Why or why not?
- What do you know about the following issues?
 - The separation of children from their families at the Mexico border.
 - The deportation of people who have been living in this country for years and have established a life in the US.
 - DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), which provides temporary legal status to those who were brought to the US as children by undocumented immigrant parents.
 - The policy of sending migrants to Mexico or Honduras while they are awaiting a hearing for asylum.



Ask different members of the group to do a little research on one of these issues and report back their findings.

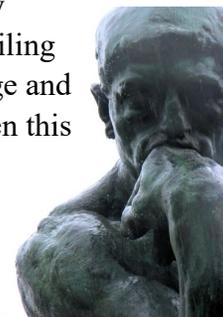
Food for Thought



Part 2

13. Racism can make a home in our hearts, distort our imagination and will, and express itself in individual actions of hatred and discrimination. Racism is one's failure to give others the respect they are due on account of being created in the image and likeness of God. And it is more than that.

14. If we are honest, racism is really about advancing, shoring up, and failing to oppose a system of white privilege and advantage based on skin color. When this system begins to shape our public choices, structure our common life together, and becomes a tool of class, this is rightly called institutionalized racism. Action to build this system of hate and inaction to oppose its dismantling are what we rightly call white supremacy. This is the evil one and the "father of lies" (Jn 8, 44), incarnate in our everyday choices and lifestyles and our laws and institutions.



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Have you ever thought about how the policies that are in place concerning immigration are linked to white supremacy?
- Since white supremacy is something condemned by our faith, what actions could you take to encourage reform of the current immigration policies?

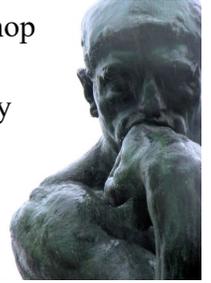


Food for Thought

Part 3

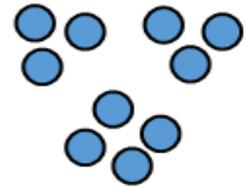


In the final section of his letter, Bishop Seitz states: “In the absence of immigration reform, I also renew my appeal to the President of the United States, to the Members of Congress, and to the jurists of our highest Courts. I beg you to listen to the voice of conscience and halt the deportation of all those who are not a danger to our communities, to stop the separation of families, and to end once and for all the turning back of refugees and death at the border.”



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What appeals would you make to our elected officials based on your views of what you have experienced today?
- What actions are you personally willing to take to impact this issue?



More on the El Paso Massacre

For additional background on factors leading to the El Paso massacre: *Frontline: Targeting El Paso* <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/targeting-el-paso/>

A response to the massacre: “Hate is not Welcome Aquí” <https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/theology-en-la-plaza/hate-not-welcome-aqu>

More on Bishop Seitz’ Letter on Racism

“5 Points for Racial Healing in Bishop Seitz’ Letter on Racism” <https://thejesuitpost.org/2019/11/5-points-for-racial-healing-in-bishop-seitz-letter-on-racism/>

“A Legacy of Latin@s Theologizing on Borderlands” <https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/theology-en-la-plaza/legacy-latin-s-theologizing-borderlands>

CLOSING PRAYER

Merciful Jesus, as an infant you fled to Egypt with Mary and Joseph. You were a vulnerable family in a foreign land, looking for shelter and sustenance. Help us to welcome those like you who cross our borders

today. Give us hearts of compassion for all migrants; help us to shape a humane response to their needs and to pass laws and policies that respect the dignity of all who come to our country. Amen.

Some Actions to Consider

As Marianists and as Christians, what action might we commit to take (individually or as a community) to respond to this issue?

- Pray for immigrants, refugees, and all affected by the crisis at our borders.
- Study the immigration issue in more depth. Each person might take one of the resources or resource groups listed below and report back to the group.
- Participate in vigils, rallies, and other gatherings that advocate for immigrant justice.
- Visit or write to immigrants in detention facilities.
- Assist as volunteers at sites providing immigrant sanctuary.
- Become involved by writing letters to political leaders to uphold the dignity of life for asylum seekers and other migrants.

ACTION



Additional Resources

[Calling the Marianist Family to Renounce the Sin of Racism](#)

A call to action by the Marianist Social Justice Collaborative, with many specific action suggestions, that challenges the Marianist Family to commit to ending racism.

[Would Jesus, Mary and Joseph be Welcome in Our Country Today?](#)

A short reflection on this question

[Justice for Immigrants](#)

The campaign by the US Bishops to educate the public about Church teaching on migration and to create the political will for just and humane immigration reform.

[National Immigration Forum](#)

Advocates for the value of immigrants to our nation by promoting responsible federal immigration policy.

[Sojourners Immigration Action](#)

Immigration actions and resources from Sojourners, an interfaith social justice group.

[Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#)

A coalition of religious groups that calls on Congress and the Administration to enact humane and equitable immigration policy reforms.

[Hope Border Institute](#)

A Catholic-based organization that works on the Mexico/US border doing research, advocacy, and leadership development.

[Marianist Statement on Immigration Reform](#)

Sign up at <https://msjc.net/get-involved> to get the monthly *Justice Jottings* and *Immigration Update* from MSJC.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Related resources available at nacms.org include:

Things Marianist: "How Do Marianists Do Social Justice?", by Jim Vogt

The Marianist Founders and Social Justice, Felipe Melcher, SM

Introduction to Social Justice, William J. Ferree, SM

Marianist Charism and Our Life/Work Among the Poor, Joseph Jansen, SM

Marianist Community Meeting Kits are provided for the Marianist Family by the North American Center for Marianist Studies, NACMS. Additional kits, as well as other Marianist Studies resources, are available at <https://nacms.org/>.



North American Center
for Marianist Studies