

"Say No to Racism. We are One in Christ".

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Would you like to be made fun of for hair colour or eye colour? If you would not then you should stand up for people who are being made fun of or even killed because of their skin colour or their race. What is racism? What does the church do to help? What has NZ done to help?

What is racism?

Racism is when someone thinks that just because of someone's physical appearance that they are inferior to them or they just outright hate them. It is a kind of discrimination and it can cause a lot of mental harm. There are different types of racism. One of them is when the government is racist this is called systemic or institutional racism. For example African Americans don't have the same rights as white people in their country. They don't get to go to a good school, a good house, a good job and live in safe places. Racism has a long history. It started a long time ago when European countries set up colonies around the world as they took control of the land and took control of the people.

What the church does to help

The Catholic social teaching principle of human dignity is about understanding that each of us is made in God's image. This means every person has a basic human dignity - te mana o te tangata - that no one can take away. Social Justice teaching is founded on solid scriptural foundations.

- "God said, 'Let us make human-kind in our image, according to our likeness.'
Genesis 1:26
- "The word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.'
Jeremiah 1:4

- “It was you who formed my inward parts, you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearful and wonderfully made, wonderful are your works.”
Psalm 139:13-14

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that, “The equality of men rests essentially on their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it: ‘Every form of social or cultural discrimination in fundamental personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, color, social conditions, language, or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God’s design’ (CCC 1935).”

Pope Benedict XVI helped us to understand this when he wrote, “The development of peoples depends, above all, on a recognition that the human race is a single family working together in true communion, not simply a group of subjects who happen to live side by side (Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, par. 53).” and St. Teresa of Avila said, “Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.”

St. John Paul II in his apostolic exhortation *Reconciliation and Penance* gives us four ways that we can be complicit in systemic racism. First, by directly supporting or using it to our own gain the evil of racism. Second, by being accessory to the sin by not caring or not being an upstander . Third, by thinking that racism is unavoidable. And fourth, by giving this state of affairs your blessing.

What NZ has done to help

If a multi-cultural, diverse society functions well, all people must be treated equally and helped to do their best. If people are racist then this will not happen. According to studies the 2013 census of New Zealand has the most ethnicities than there are countries in the world. Our country is made of Maori, European, Chinese, Indians, Filipino and many more ethnic groups. New Zealand is a member of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). CERD is the main international human rights treaty dealing with racial discrimination and it is focusing on matters such as addressing racial discrimination or violence and condemning ideas of racial superiority or hatred. It requires countries to protect human rights in an equitable ways, including rights to health and adequate housing and freedom of expression.

New Zealand is trying to make a multicultural society in different ways. They are looking at Te Tiriti Waitangi and trying to use it in making laws and day to day things like making Matariki a public holiday. They are trying to teach people not to be racist by teaching about it in school in History lessons. The Human Rights Commission has a 'Give Nothing to Racism Campaign' People from different cultural groups are being asked to say what they think about different issues so that their voice is heard. The New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and The Human Rights Act 1993 are laws that have been made to make sure that everyone in New Zealand is treated equally and fairly. The New Zealand Government has made a plan that 'reflects the history, challenges, and aspirations of Aotearoa New Zealand...to progressively eliminate racism in all forms'.

I will now be talking about one of my friends because she suffered from racism. One day she was minding her own business walking to the shops with her mum and suddenly someone came up to her and blamed her for causing COVID-19 and they started to use racial slurs but she just walked away. They made fun of her eye shape. The reason

that they blamed her for COVID-19 is because she is Chinese and COVID-19 started in China.

These people were being racist because they were just blaming a random Asian child for COVID-19 when she didn't cause it. According to the Catholic church we are all the same people we just look different. All they were doing was taking all their anger out on them.

Also another one of my friends suffered racism. They were in the car driving along. They stopped at a red light and some random white guy started shouting mean words at them because of their skin colour because they are Maori. When the light turned green the other people's car zoomed in front and tried to block them.

These people were being racist because they were shouting at them just because of their skin which is actually not a big matter. Jesus didn't sacrifice himself for white people, he sacrificed himself for the Catholic Church and all of humanity.

Pope FRancis said at his General Audience about the protests in the United States following the killing of George Floyd, that "We cannot claim to defend the sacredness of every human life while turning a blind eye to racism and exclusion".