**Resources for Respect Life Month ~ October 2019**

**Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love**

a pastoral letter against racism

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

**Prayers of the Faithful Against Racism**

**For our Church,** that we may celebrate and welcome the diverse faces of Christ in our community, our worship, our ministries, and our leaders, let us pray to the Lord.

**For world leaders,** that they may work to end the violence perpetrated by verbal attacks, deadly weapons, and cold indifference. May our nation and countries around the world become havens of peace, let us pray to the Lord.

**For our community,** that we may receive the grace to see every human being as a child of God, regardless of race, language, or culture, let us pray to the Lord.

**For parents and educators,**that we may teach our children how to resolve differences non-violently and respectfully and have the courage to model it in our own behavior, let us pray to the Lord.

**For this faith community,**that we may hear the call of our leaders in the new Pastoral Letter against Racism to respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit to act together to end violence and racism, let us pray to the Lord.

**For our public officials,**that the Spirit of Wisdom may help them strive to work for equal education, suitable housing, and equal employment opportunities for all, let us pray to the Lord.

**For solidarity in our global human family,** that we may be vigilant in our protection of those who are most vulnerable and most in need, let us pray to the Lord.

**For those who have died,**especially those who have died in the pursuit of justice, may they be welcomed into the great glory of God’s love, let us pray to the Lord.

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**Prayer to Address the Sin of Racism**

 We pray for healing to address  
The persistent sin of racism  
Which rejects the full humanity  
Of some of your children,  
And the talents and potential You have given.

We pray for the grace to recognize  
The systems that do not support  
The dignity of every person,  
That do not promote respect  
For those who are seen as other,  
Who bear the legacy of centuries  
Of discrimination, fear, and violence.

We pray for graced structures  
So children of color in Flint, and all children,  
Have access to clean water and health care.

We pray for graced structures  
So children of color in Mississippi, and all children,  
Have quality education that will allow them to develop their gifts.

We pray for graced structures  
So children of color in Camden, and all children,  
Have homes where families can live in dignity and security.

We pray for graced structures  
So children of color in Chicago, and all children,  
Can grow up without fear, without the sound of gunshots.  
Lord of all, we ask you to hear and answer our prayers.  
Give us eyes to see how the past   
Has shaped the complex present,  
And to perceive how we must create  
A new way forward,  
With a new sense of community  
That embraces and celebrates  
The rich diversity of all,  
That helps us live out your call to reject  
The sin of racism, the stain of hate,  
And to seek a compassionate solidarity  
Supported by Your grace and Your love.  We ask this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

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*The injustice and harm racism causes are an attack on human life. The Church in the United States has spoken out consistently and forcefully against abortion, assisted suicide, euthanasia, the death penalty, and other forms of violence that threaten human life. It is not a secret that these attacks on human life have severely affected people of color, who are disproportionally affected by poverty, targeted for abortion, have less access to healthcare, have the greatest numbers on death row, and are most likely to feel pressure to end their lives when facing serious illness.* ***As bishops, we unequivocally state that racism is a life issue****. Accordingly, we will not cease to speak forcefully against and work toward ending racism. Racism directly places brother and sister against each other, violating the dignity inherent in each person. The Apostle James commands the Christian: “show no partiality as you adhere to the faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ” (Jas 2:1).* (page 30 of the pastoral)

* Prayers of the Faithful and Prayer to Address the Sin of Racism
* Weekly Bulletin Education – four weeks
* Insert the USCCB resource, *A Call to Address Racism in Our Hearts and Communities* or the backgrounder, *What Is Systemic Racism*, in the bulletin for parishioners to take home
* Offer an Adult Book Study/Discussion or Film Series
* See the list of age-appropriate study guides developed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
* Download a copy of the full pastoral (usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/upload/open-wide-our-hearts.pdf)
* Ask your pastor/homilists to reflect on the pastoral during a homily on Respect Life Sunday or other weekend during the month of October
* Contact the Justice & Peace/Parish Social Ministry coordinator at your local Catholic Charities office for help

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**for**

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**October is Respect Life Month** in the U.S. Catholic community.

Please consider planning opportunities during October 2019 for your parish or school or campus community to learn and reflect on the pastoral of our U.S. Catholic Bishops, *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call To Love*.

The attached ideas and resources (from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and other sources) were assembled by the Diocese of Rochester Public Policy Committee/Catholic Charities.

We invite you to contact the Justice and Peace/Parish Social Ministry staffperson at the Catholic Charities office serving your county for help planning and using these resources. A contact list is included in this packet. Thank you!