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# An Examination Of How Human Dignity And Solidarity Are Approached In Church

The concept of the common is largely related to the CST principles of solidarity and human dignity. This is a relationship that was first established by Pope John Paul II. John Paul II believes that human beings are created as social beings. The Catholic Church teaches that the concept of the promotion of the common good is embedded within the context of confirming to the individual rights of every person. Racism is a major drawback to this. It denies certain individuals their basic rights and freedom. Racism negatively affects the conformity to the principles of CST. The effect is especially felt on the poor and the less fortunate in the society. Common good practices involves taking the needs of the poor into account. This belief is rooted within a framework of biblical, medieval and patristic thought.

The concepts of solidarity and human dignity are in line with the ideologies of social justice. Racism is a violation of the basic features of social justice. Today's high-tech knowledge based economy has been manipulated by a select few to make everyone think that some races are more superior to the others. This belief has led to the disintegration of the basic components of solidarity. Solidarity involves people coming together and having common beliefs that enable them to work towards the attainment of the same goals (Marshall 2013). Racism comes in between and disintegrates this unity separating people on grounds of their disparities in racial background. The society is then left to deal with its problems separately and this only leads to the development of even greater challenges.

Take the case of the recent U.S. presidential elections. The elections revealed a great division within the Catholic Church. This division reveals an even greater disparity that exists on the same context in terms of race, gender and class. This is quite unfortunate as it is a violation of the fundamental rights of individuals even to the most basic grounds. These elections proved to the world that racism has found its way into literally every aspect of modern living. The Church has the responsibility of defending those marginalized by the injustice of racism. In order to do this, there is the need for an institutionalized assessment of conscience to be conducted. This should be done by coming up with questions about gender and race. The credibility of the Church in dealing with this matter is not at 100% given the church's strict regulations that deter women from the highest levels of ecclesial leadership.

## Addressing racism

There are different methods that can be used in dealing with the challenge of racism. First of all,

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individuals should expand their understanding of racism. Information is power. Having a better understanding of racism means that individuals will have the capacity to deal with it more amicably. The most important component in this case is to be able to uncover the different forms of racism. It is practically impossible to deal with racism if one does not know the different types of racism that exist in the society.

Most individuals believe that racism exclusively involves the unfair treatment, harassment and abuse of someone from a different culture. This is not the case. There are other hidden types of racism which can only be uncovered by expanding one's knowledge in racism. Recently, subtle and unintentional types of racism have been come up. These are especially conveyed through cracking jokes and making insensitive remarks. More recently, cyber-racism has come up as a way of individuals and especially kids to pervasively spread messages of intolerance (Gil-gonzález et al. 2014).

Just like any other challenge the best way to deal with racism is to cut off its roots. This means that the primary targets should be children. Children are innocent souls. They are born free of discrimination. There is therefore, the possibility of them growing up to develop a strong sense of justice. This can only be made possible by teaching them how to do so. Teaching kids from a young age on how to hold diversity with high respect is one way in which racism can be avoided in future. At a young age, a kid's perception about such matters in life as diversity is still very limited. A kid will tend to believe what he or she is told and what he or she sees practically in life. Creating an enabling environment for them will help build a positive perception about diversity in their minds from an early age.

Teaching children how to value the essence of cultural diversity is another way in which the roots of racism can be gotten rid of. The fact that one is a child does not mean that he or she will not be able to notice small differences. Children are very much capable of noticing the difference in skin color when a white and black person are seated together. How they grow up to perceive and assimilate these differences depends on what they were taught when they were kids. Parents should teach their children how to appreciate cultural differences (Trenerry and Paradies 2012). This can be done by say for instance hooking them up with other kids from different cultures, buying them story-books that support understanding in cultural diversity such as 'Black as Kyra and white like me.'

It is ludicrous to assume that these primary insights offered to children are enough to deter them from practicing racism. Given the complexity of the different forms of racism that now exist, children might end up making racist comments about a person's skin color, accent or any other thing without them even knowing about it. This is why it is important for parents to maintain a policy of zero tolerance to racism in their households. Whenever a child makes a mistake by uttering a racist comment, they should be corrected with immediate effect and then made to

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understand that what they said was totally wrong. Another way of raising racist-free children is to limit their exposure to racism. This can especially be done by limiting the amount of time they spend on media as well as assessing the content. Media has a tendency of normalizing subtle forms of racism through movies and video games. If children are left to spend most of their free time viewing this content, there are high chances that they will grow up to become racists in future as they will perceive it as being completely normal.

The church also plays a crucial role in the eradication of racism. Many people go to church every week at least once and others twice. This means that the church can actually take advantage of these numbers to teach the congregations on what needs to be done in order to develop racist-free societies. Priests and pastors can teach their flocks about the fundamental scriptural beliefs of equality and dignity of all human races. They can create the understanding that everyone regardless of their culture, race, or beliefs was created in the image of God. Furthermore, they can teach that Christ's redemption was meant to be for the entire human race without any exceptions. Cultivating a belief into the minds of the Christians that God is against racism will certainly guarantee good results. The same can be done for the other religions.

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