

### *Respect for Person regarding racism*

To begin this section for the Novena Life I did what is called setting the foundation. In this case, the foundation I aimed to set was about opening the discussion of racism and our Catholic response to it. Throughout this I have attached the sources I used in preparing for this video.

### **Catholic Social Teaching and Common Good**

A key point of understanding what the Catholic Church's mission in respecting and honoring the dignity of each person is understanding what common good has to do with this.

Common good is best explained by Saint Pope John XXIII in his encyclical on Christianity and Social Progress:

**“To this end, a sane view of the common good must be present and operative in men invested with public authority. They must take account of all those social conditions which favor the full development of human personality. Moreover, we consider it altogether vital that the numerous intermediary bodies and corporate enterprises—which are, so to say, the main vehicle of this social growth—be really autonomous, and loyally collaborate in pursuit of their own specific interests and those of the common good. For these groups must themselves necessarily present the form and substance of a true community, and this will only be the case if they treat their individual members as human persons and encourage them to take an active part in the ordering of their lives.”**

In summary, common good does not mean we do the thing that benefits the most people; rather, we work intentionally so each person is enabled to succeed in being a part of growing the Body of Christ. This point is further reinforced by the Catechism of the Catholic Church regarding Catholic Social Teaching:

**“Social justice can be obtained only in respecting the transcendent dignity of man. The person represents the ultimate end of society, which is ordered to him: What is at stake is the dignity of the human person, whose defense and promotion have been entrusted to us by the Creator, and to whom the men and women at every moment of history are strictly and responsibly in debt.” – CCC 1929**

In our Catholic Social Teaching the foundation of everything we should be doing when it comes to serving one another is in the acceptance that the dignity of each human person is always worth defending and fighting for. With this we also emphasize the

common good, or the principle that the Church and state ought to care for the greatest good of all persons.

## Unity

Another point we hear around the globe and from people in various levels of leadership in every part of society is this call they make of unity. An example would be the call of unity from the leadership in our country and in our State of Michigan without clarifying or saying specifically what that unity is or what they are asking us to achieve. I would like to take that opportunity and outline what our Catholic faith says and calls us to in achieving this unity:

**“Concern for achieving unity ‘involves the whole Church, faithful and clergy alike.’ But we must realize ‘that this holy objective – the reconciliation of all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ – transcends human powers and gifts.’ That is why we place all our hope ‘in the prayer of Christ for the Church, in the love of the Father for us, and in the power of the Holy Spirit.’” – CCC 822**

Through Christ, each one of us can be instruments of a new kind of table for unity; one that has chairs for everyone, where neighbors are respected and loved and where people make room for each other. This can only work if we remain just people in the model Jesus Christ lived for us to follow, and in living justly so will this newly structured table remain just.

## Food for All

To begin, we open with a summarized quote from line 1396 in the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

**“Our participation in the Eucharist fulfills our call to the unity received in Baptism. It transforms us in order that we might live according to its nature – from one bread, we can also become one body.”** – summarized from CCC 1396

In the Eucharist we can physically be closer to the original design of God for us. That original design is that we all sit at one table together in His presence with all of us having a place at it. Unfortunately, as we are prone to do and as outlined in the shared beginning of our history with the Original Sin of Adam and Eve eating of the fruit in the Garden of Eden. We have regularly failed to pursue this unity with one another in God’s image. We have a call to action that is inspired by our faith and the many glimpses it provides of what love and unity can look like. We know that we can find refuge around the table of the Lord because when we are there, we are all one in the love of Jesus. This is a great power revealed to us in the Eucharist: the real presence of the Body and

Blood of our lord, Jesus, blurs any and every distinction between host and guest, need and plenty. In the gift of His very self, our Lord gives us a counter-identity: one of love and solidarity, one that does not judge based on skin color or ethnicity. It only looks to transform us into what we have received – Christ himself.

With this understanding, the Eucharist is the place where we start to make room at the table. The Eucharist is how we pull up a chair to God's table.

### **Conversion and Mercy**

Our Savior is one of deep love and radical mercy, which informs the way we ought to live. Conversion is a sign that God's transforming power is alive and well. Through it, we have hope that people might be directed toward goodness, but also institutions and entire groups of people as well. In that way, we hope in the power of God's love over hearts to overcome even the ugliest manifestations of racism. It is only by allowing God's grace to work through the human person that social changes really happen. The conversion of our hearts serves as the first step toward remedying unjust social institutions and sinful structures. When we allow God to conform us personally to the norms of His justice, good can be achieved by the larger society. As we have seen very recently in the last year alone, the human or man-made solutions to solving social justice are obviously not working as they should or in their intent to solve the world's problems of discrimination. In every aspect when you break it down to who is missing or where the breakdown in the plan occurred; it always comes back to God being excluded from the man-made plans of pursuing social justice.

**“Without the help of grace, men would not know how, “to discern the often-narrow path between the cowardice which gives in to evil, and the violence which under the illusion of fighting evil only makes it worse.” This is the path of charity, that is, of the love of God and of neighbor. Charity is the greatest social commandment. It respects others and their rights. It requires the practice of justice, and it alone makes us capable of it. Charity inspires a life of self-giving: “Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it.” – CCC 1889**

Reflection Questions and the Closing Prayer Activity is the PowerPoint titled *Sin and Hope Timeline*.

Thank you for your time and have a God blessed day,

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