



JUST Love

JULY 2020



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE OFFICE OF PEACE, JUSTICE AND
ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF SAINT ELIZABETH



The Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth have chosen as one of our Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity Priority Issues: “Celebrating the dignity of all people, we work to recognize and eliminate racism in all its forms.” In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the tragic killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Avery, and Breonna Taylor have challenged us to face once again what someone has called Pandemic-1619 (the year the American slave trade began). To help in our formation as anti-racist individuals and as a Congregation, *JustLove* offers links to the following online videos:

Understanding My Privilege, Sue Borrego <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIRxqC0Sze4>

The Future of Race in America, Michelle Alexander <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQ6H-Mz6hgw>

Race: Race and Racist Institutions, Eduardo Mendietta <https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/wiphi/wiphi-value-theory/wiphi-political/v/race-racist-institutions>

We invite you to ask one or two friends to join you in viewing each of these videos. Then have a phone or ZOOM chat with them, reflecting on the following questions:

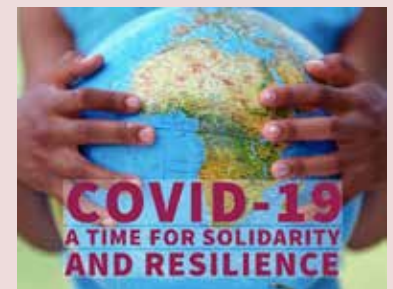
1. What in this video reflects my experience of race? What challenges my experience of race?
2. What would it mean in my life to take seriously the information in this video?
3. What would it mean for my Congregation/parish/ministry/other groups to take seriously the information in this video?

If you have one of these conversations, let *JustLove* know how it went. Email pjei@scnj.org

“Through plague eyes I realize there’s an important distinction between social connection and social solidarity. Social connection means feeling empathetic toward others and being kind to them. That’s fine in normal times. Social solidarity is more tenacious. It’s an active commitment to the common good — the kind of thing needed in times like now. This concept of solidarity grows out of Catholic social teaching. It starts with a belief in the infinite dignity of each human person but sees people embedded in webs of mutual obligation — to one another and to all creation. It celebrates the individual and the whole together, and to the nth degree. Solidarity is not a feeling; it’s an active virtue. It is out of solidarity, and not normal utilitarian logic, that George Marshall in “Saving Private Ryan” endangered a dozen lives to save just one. It’s solidarity that causes a Marine to risk his life dragging the body of his dead comrade from battle to be returned home. It’s out of solidarity that health care workers stay on their feet

amid terror and fatigue. Some things you do not for yourself or another but for the common whole. It will require a tenacious solidarity from all of us to endure the months ahead. We’ll be stir-crazy, bored, desperate for normal human contact. But we’ll have to stay home for the common good. It’s an odd kind of heroism this crisis calls for. Those also serve who endure and wait. I wonder if there will be an enduring shift in consciousness after all this. All those tribal us-them stories don’t seem quite as germane right now. The most relevant unit of society at the moment is the entire human family.”

David Brooks, “Screw This Virus,” *The New York Times*, March 19, 2020



As meeting restrictions lessen, you might want to consider hosting a small group for people who are experiencing unemployment because of COVID-19. At this link find the free resource *Spirituality of Work: Unemployed Together* from the Pastoral Center in Alameda, CA. <https://pastoral.center/unemployed-together>

July 2, the traditional feast of the Visitation of Mary and Elizabeth, is the date on which Mother Xavier Mehegan first moved to Convent Station, destined to be her home and the center of ever-increasing ministries for the next 55 years. Mary's cousin was to give her name to Mother Xavier's Congregation and its Convent Station home and, in good time, to the Academy and the College. We offer for your contemplation this African American image of the Visitation. For 160 years Sisters of Charity have echoed the words of St. Jane de Chantal that are included in the painting, "This is the place of our delight and rest." The artist, Brother Mickey McGrath, OSFS, describes his work in these words:



This image of the Visitation of Mary and Elizabeth was commissioned for the Monastery of the Visitation in north Minneapolis, a group of monastic sisters very near and dear to my heart. In what has become a well-known neighborhood tradition, the sisters hang a windsock outside their house every other day of the week as a signal to the neighborhood children that they can come in and enjoy after-school activities. They read and paint. They pray and have fun. The sisters celebrate birthdays with the kids and walk through hard times with them as well. The spirit of the first Visitation, where Jesus was so lovingly shared between two kinswomen, is very much alive today and is the inspiration for this painting.

Mary, dressed in gold because she is the woman clothed with the sun, also wears a cape with green stars and blue crosses, which symbolize Bethlehem and Calvary. She is a little fearful of the news she has recently received herself, that she was pregnant with God's child. But Luke tells us that she put her fears aside to be with her cousin Elizabeth and help her in her own miraculous pregnancy. Elizabeth's bright and welcoming smile assures Mary, and us, that in God's plans, everything always works out for the best. The tops of their halos form a heart which meets at the bottom in the wombs of the two women. The fluttering windsock behind them reminds us of the wind of the Holy Spirit, ever fresh, ever new.

JPIC Dates to Remember in July

2 Traditional Feast of the Visitation/Date of Mother Xavier's 1860 arrival at Convent Station "Blessed one! With your yes you moved us toward the home we long for, and all things made right. She came to me, the mother of my Lord. All creation with me seemed to roar." From *Visitation Villanelle* by Sarah O'Brien

4 USA Independence Day "A nation can be considered great when it defends liberty as Lincoln did, when it fosters a culture which enables people to "dream" of full rights for all their brothers and sisters, as Martin Luther King sought to do; when it strives for justice and the cause of the oppressed, as Dorothy Day did by her tireless work, the fruit of a faith which becomes dialogue and sows peace in the contemplative style of Thomas Merton." Pope Francis, *Address to Congress*, 9/24/15

14 Feast of St. Kateri Tekakwitha, native American and patron of ecology "The search of the... indigenous peoples for life in its abundance takes the form of what they call 'good living', which is fully realized in the Beatitudes. It

is a matter of living in harmony with oneself, with nature, with human beings and with the Supreme Being, since there is intercommunication throughout the cosmos; here there are neither exclusions nor those who exclude, and here a full life for all can be projected." Final Document of the Synod on the Amazon

26 Feast of Saints Anne and Joachim, grandparents of Jesus. "The words of grandparents have special value for the young. And the young know it. I still carry with me, always, in my breviary, the words my grandmother consigned to me in writing on the day of my priestly ordination. I read them often and they do me good." Pope Francis

29 Feast of St. Martha, Patron of wait staff. Try to be especially kind to wait staff in restaurants. Be patient. Tip generously

30 World Day Against Human Trafficking – Fight Trafficking by distributing the SC Trafficking Prayer Card. Request them from pjei@scnj.org