

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

December 2020						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		Rev. 1 John Helmuelter Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. 2 Joseph Vogel Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. 3 For the souls of our deceased FOP members	Rev. 4 For prayer requests received	Rev. 5 For our Holy Father, Pope Francis
Rev. 6 Richard Baumberger Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. 7 Charles Duman Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. 8 Rodney Farke. Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. 9 Edward Pierce Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. 10 John Rasmussen Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. 11 Joseph Short Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. 12 Gregory Frankman Sioux Falls, SD
Rev. 13 Roger Geditz Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. 14 Randy Phillips Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. 15 Jerome Ranek Sioux Falls, SD	Rev. 16 Peter Kirchner St. Cloud, MN	Rev. 17 Gerald Mischke St. Cloud, MN	Rev. 18 Gregory Paffel St. Cloud, MN	Rev. 19 Todd Schneider St. Cloud, MN
Rev. 20 James Dyer St. Louis, MO	Rev. Msgr. 21 Edmund Griesedieck St. Louis, MO	Rev. 22 Martin Mannion St. Louis, MO	Rev. 23 Aaron Nord St. Louis, MO	Rev. 24 David Novak St. Louis, MO	Rev. 25 Charles Tichacek St. Louis, MO	Rev. 26 James Brown Toledo, OH
Rev. 27 Norbert Howe Toledo, OH	Rev. 28 Edward Littelmann Toledo, OH	Rev. 29 Thomas Oedy Toledo, OH	Rev. 30 Nicholas Weibl Toledo, OH	Rev. 31 Dale Branson Tucson, AZ		

A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

O Jesus, Eternal High Priest, live in (name of priest), act in him, speak in and through him. Think your thoughts in his mind, love through his heart. Give him your own disposition and feelings. Teach, lead and guide him always. Correct, enlighten and expand his thoughts and behavior. Possess his soul, take over his entire personality and life. Replace him with yourself. Incline him to constant adoration and thanksgiving; pray in and through him. Let him live in you and keep him in this intimate union always.

O Mary, Immaculate Conception, Mother of Jesus and Mother of priests, pray and intercede for (.....). Amen.

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This donation is to help the Fraternity of Priests in continuing their work of ministering to priests.

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Dear Fr. Von DeKosia,



"To gather priests to Christ and to one another to proclaim..."

THE VISITATION

A monthly publication of the Fraternity of Priests, Inc.

Systemic Racism?

By Fr. Joe Luisi - Pittsburgh/Greensburg Fraternity

During the recent Vice-Presidential Debate, Mike Pence openly said that there is no "systemic racism" in our country. On September 17, President Trump denounced school curricula that emphasize the impact of slavery and racism on American history and blamed "left-wing indoctrination" for nationwide protests against police brutality."

President Trump and other top administration officials have said they don't believe that systemic racism exists and have argued that curricula like the 1619 Project provide an unduly dark vision of America's founding. ('Left-wing' lessons in schools about slavery, racism to blame for protests in US, Trump says, Justin Sink and Josh Wingrove from "ThePrint" 18 Sep 2020). While racism may not be as important an issue as "the right to life" for unborn children, it's still a hotbutton issue in this tumultuous election. The purpose of this article is to examine the remarks of President Trump and Vice President Pence in light of the USCCB document Open Wide Our Hearts – the Enduring Call to Love, a pastoral letter against racism published in 2018.

The 32-page pastoral letter answers the question *What is Racism?* The letter says that "racism arises when—either consciously or unconsciously—a person holds

that his or her own race or ethnicity is superior, and therefore judges persons of other races or ethnicities as inferior and unworthy of equal regard. When this conviction or attitude leads individuals or groups to exclude, ridicule, mistreat, or unjustly discriminate against persons on the basis of their race or ethnicity, it is sinful. Racist acts are sinful because they violate justice. They reveal a failure to acknowledge the human dignity of the persons offended, to recognize them as the neighbors Christ calls us to love (Mt 22:39)". (pg. 3)

The pastoral letter speaks of many forms of racism including deliberate sinful acts associated with the appearance of nooses and swastikas in public spaces. It also appears unconsciously when an attitude of superiority can be seen in how certain groups of people are vilified, called criminals, or are perceived as being unable to contribute to society, even unworthy of its benefits. (pgs. 4-5).

I am reminded of an interview years ago on a late-night comedy show with an AfricanAmerican comedian. The host asked if the comedian had ever been subjected to racism. The "are you kidding me?" answer came swiftly with a story. The actor told how he and another African American comedian were in an elevator in a hotel. The door opened and a senior

citizen white woman walked into the elevator before the elevator door closed leaving her with these two black men. As the elevator began to move she yelled, "Don't hurt me! I'll give you anything you want!" The elevator door shortly opened to her floor without incident. The two comedians, shocked and speechless, decided to investigate and learned the woman's room number. Later that day, Arsenio Hall and Eddie Murphy had flowers delivered to the woman's room.

In this document, the bishops affirmed the existence of **systemic racism** by saying: "We have also seen years of systemic racism working in how resources are allocated to communities that remain de facto segregated. As an example, the water crisis in Flint, Michigan, resulted from policy decisions that negatively affected the inhabitants, the majority of whom were African Americans. We could go on, for the instances of discrimination, prejudice, and racism, sadly, are too many." (pg. 6)

On the same page, the bishops say, "With the positive changes that arose from the civil rights movement and related civil rights legislation, some may believe that racism is no longer a major affliction of our society—that it is only found in the hearts of individuals who can be dismissed as ignorant or unenlightened. But racism still profoundly affects our culture,

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Fraternity Financial Report

Monthly Budget:

\$4,750.00

Actual Donations:

\$2,970.00

Budget Deficit:

\$1,780.00

Current as of
September 30, 2020.

As I mentioned in a previous article, I am making my way through Venerable Fulton Sheen's *The Priest Is Not His Own*. There is so much goodness in the book, I can only digest a page or two at a time.

Sheen's insights on praying the Breviary struck me recently. He begins the section by saying, "Few like to admit that they are bored by something they are expected to enjoy. The Breviary belongs in this category" (*The Priest Is Not His Own*, Martino Publishing 2016, p137). As soon as I read this, I knew I would glean fruit from this section of his book.

Sheen is so real!

Sheen goes on to write about how the Breviary may intentionally be difficult for most priests, as we wrestle with God, like Jacob. Sheen goes on to compare our prayer of the Breviary to the woman from Tyre and Sidon: "She had three handicaps to overcome: Christ's silence; the resistance of the disciples; and finally Christ's seeming rejection of her as unworthy to share His glory. Are not these our three common difficulties with the Breviary? Our High Priest seems to be silent; the Church makes us use a tongue which is hard; and all too often we let ourselves become convinced that Our Lord is not very pleased with us. Yet we struggle along, day by day, inspired by a sense of duty and faith." (*ibid.* p138)

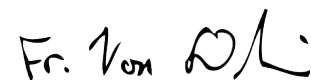
Despite the difficulties we sometimes encounter in praying the Breviary well, Sheen reminds us that this is an opportunity. We are praying not only for the Church and ourselves but for the whole world—those who are "unpraying, the sinners, those who turn their backs on God, those who delay repentance.... Whenever we pick up that book, we pick up ... two billion unbelievers, fallen-aways, the burden of the churches throughout the world. If millions are reluctant to pray, do we not feel their

reluctance? If the unconverted drag their feet, how can we take wings and fly?" (*ibid.*) We make reparation for those who don't know God. We take on their reluctance to pray by persisting in prayer through our own reluctance!

Sheen ends this section by giving five aids to praying the Breviary. First, to pray the Office in the presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist, as the Body of Christ needs to be united in prayer with the Head. Second, remember that most of the Psalms show us one of two figures: the Sufferer and the King. He suggests that we interpret the suffering psalms as the Church and the kingly psalms as Christ. Third, ask the Holy Spirit to help us to pray during the Breviary, so that the Holy Spirit will pray in us and through us. Fourth, offer certain hours of the office for specific intentions – those entrusted to our prayers by God and by our parishioners. Fifth, remove all distractions. We can't focus on the Breviary when listening to the radio or watching TV... and I would add nor when we are checking e-mail or listening to a podcast.

As priests, we are entrusted with prayer for the Church and the world. It may not be easy, but the struggle and dryness are important for uniting us to those for whom we pray. If you've fallen away from the Liturgy of the Hours, I invite you to recommit yourself to it. If you do it half-heartedly, I invite you to go onto the wrestling mat with renewed vigor for God and His Church.

Grace and Peace,
Fr. Von DeRosia



Editor's Note: Please send articles, comments, and photos to the our editor, Fr. Bob Carr, via e-mail to editor@fraternityofpriests.org. Newsletter material from all Fraternity members is gratefully accepted.

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and it has no place in the Christian heart. The evil causes great harm to its victims, and it corrupts the souls of those who harbor racist or prejudicial thoughts. The persistence of the evil of racism is why we are writing this letter now. People are still being harmed, so action is still needed." (pgs. 6-7)

The next part of the bishops' letter could be construed as a direct answer to any denial of systemic racism when the bishops say, "Too many good and faithful Catholics remain unaware of the connection between institutional racism and the continued erosion of the sanctity of life. We are not finished with the work. The evil of racism festers in part because, as a nation, there has been very limited formal acknowledgement of the harm done to so many, no moment of atonement, no national process of reconciliation and, all too often a neglect of our history. Many of our institutions still harbor, and too many of our laws still sanction, practices that deny justice and equal access to certain groups of people. God demands more from us. We cannot, therefore, look upon the progress against racism in recent decades and conclude that our current situation meets the standard of justice. In fact, God demands what is right and just." (pg. 10)

To be sure, the "Black Lives Matter" movement began after this Pastoral letter was written. It would seem to this writer that the senseless deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Stephon Clark, Jacob Blake etc. that the Pastoral Letter on Racism was sadly prophetic in stating categorically that racism still exists. That's not to justify the rioting, looting and anarchy that sometimes accompanies race riots. The Church stands against violence of

all sorts. The Church does stand on the side of peaceful demonstrators, labor unions, strikes and civil disobedience as a matter of social justice.

I listened to an NPR interview with a middle-aged educated black woman on the topic of racism. Her point was that she has lived with racism her whole life. She said that it's always in the back of her mind so that when she fails to get a job offer, she wonders, is it because the other candidates were more qualified than me? Or is it because the interviewer was racist? She said that she doesn't mean to be paranoid but racism is embedded in our culture.

I think the interviewer might have opined, "While **black** lives matter, don't **all** lives matter?" The woman replied, "Of course they do. But there's a difference when there is systemic racism. Typically, white people are not the target of systemic racism." She said that she cannot change the color of her skin and consequently has been the victim of racism throughout her life. She shared the analogy of a man dating a woman whom he has recently learned was emotionally, physically and sexually abused by other men in her past. The black woman queried, "What if the man in that case disbelieved the woman or downplayed the extent of her abuse. Would that be polite? No, it would be hurtful and would quickly end the date." She went on to say that on such sensitive topics, one must tread gently, not realizing what the other person may have been through.

In the ThePrint article, the writers claim that President Trump wants to stop the 1619 Project founded by Nikole Hannah-Jones because it provides an unduly dark vision of America's founding. Basically,

Hannah-Jones says that slavery in America began much earlier than the history books teach. She determines that it began in our country as early as 1619 in the American colonies and that our history should reflect the origins of racism here. Whereas the Trump administration issued a memo September 4 banning federal agencies from conducting racial sensitivity training that considers "critical race theory, white privilege, or any other training or propaganda effort that teaches or suggests either 1) that the United States is an inherently racist or evil country or 2) that any race or ethnicity is inherently racist or evil.*

The 1619 Project is quite controversial, even among scholars. There are no less than five historians who have written letters to the New York Times objecting to Nikole Hannah-Jones, rewriting history. (Wikipedia) I will not argue for or against the 1619 Project since that is beyond the scope of this article.

In closing, based upon Open Wide Our Hearts – the Enduring Call to Love a pastoral letter against racism by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and notwithstanding the 1619 Project which is still hotly debated by scholars, it appears as though on the issue of racism that those who deny systemic racism are in direct contradiction to the content of the bishops' letter.

**The author of the memo on behalf of the president, Russell Vought, director of the OMB wrote: The President, and his Administration, are fully committed to the fair and equal treatment of all individuals in the United States. . . The divisive, false, and demeaning propaganda of the critical race theory movement is contrary to all we stand for as Americans and should have no place in the Federal government. (ed.)*

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

