A Study Guide for
The Pastoral Letter on
Racial Harmony
by
Archbishop Alfred C. Hughes, S.T.D.
March 9, 2013

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

In 1956 Archbishop Joseph Rummel issued his landmark Pastoral Letter, "The Morality of Racial Segregation". In it he stated that "racial segregation as such is morally wrong and sinful because it is a denial of the unity-solidarity of the human race as conceived by God in the creation of Adam and Eve."

Fifty years later, my predecessor, Archbishop Alfred Hughes published "Made in the Image and Likeness of God, a Pastoral Letter on Racial Harmony". In his letter, Archbishop Hughes briefly outlined the church’s teaching on our nation’s “original sin of racism”. He states that the Church’s “official teaching is not widely known” and “many Church leaders and many of the faithful have not given it high priority”.

Calling all Catholics to follow the church’s teaching by embracing all people, Archbishop Hughes concludes his pastoral letter with a Pastoral Plan of Action for the archdiocesan administrative offices, schools, parishes and all Catholics. Working to create harmony between all people and accepting each other as brothers and sisters is a vital element in our New Battle of New Orleans against crime, murder and racism. So today I am pleased to introduce this study guide to assist parishes, schools and Archdiocesan staff to better understand and implement "Made in the Image and Likeness of God, a Pastoral Letter on Racial Harmony". It is my hope that this guide will promote a fresh discussion of the pastoral letter in schools, parishes, archdiocesan offices as well as in our homes and that it will spark renewed action in carrying out the pastoral plan.

As we celebrate The Year of the Family and Faith in our archdiocese, let us recognize the vital part each individual plays in our church and the richness that each ethnicity brings to the fabric of our archdiocesan family.

Wishing you God’s blessings, and praying for our unity, I am

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Gregory M. Aymond
Archbishop of New Orleans
SESSION ONE
A PASTORAL LETTER ON RACIAL HARMONY and MY OWN STORY

Opening Prayer
Leader: As we gather, let us remember that we are a community gathered in God’s presence.

Let us pray in the name of the Father... Amen.

Scripture Reading: 1 Peter 2, 9-10
But you are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises” of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were ‘no people’ but now are God’s people…”
The Word of the Lord.

Silent Reflection
All: “(We) pray that we might, as a Church and a community, become a place welcoming to linguistically, racially and culturally diverse people, a place of beauty, a place of safety, a place of peace, a place for spiritual enrichment and renewal. God grant us the grace, the wisdom and the courage to realize this vision.” Amen.
(Made in the Image of Likeness of God, page 13, paragraph 59)

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Task Overview
Archbishop Hughes stated in his pastoral why this document was needed. Referring to the continuing disharmony in the Church, on page 6, paragraph 31 he says, “The Church’s response to this unjust situation has been uneven and often half-hearted. First, the official teaching is not widely known. Second, many Church leaders and many of the faithful have not given it a high priority. Moreover, as communities moved from historical segregation in territorial church parishes, white flight has created segregation in many other places. Persistent challenges regarding community life, public education, economics, drugs and violence have been labeled ‘their problem, not ours.’ Both members of the Church and the wider community have failed too frequently to help the man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho who fell prey to robbers (Luke 10:30).”

Goals of this Session
By the end of this session, we will have
- introduced the pastoral letter and our task together.
- shared our personal experiences of the historical and present dynamics of racism.
- shared our personal encounters with people of different racial or ethnic groups.
- named times when we personally encountered racism and shared how this experience impacted the way we were able to fully live life together.

Today’s Reading
During this session, we will read the follow sections of the pastoral, Made in the Image and Likeness of God:
Introduction, paragraphs 1-8
My Own Story, paragraphs 9-15

Questions for Table Discussions
Select a reporter whose task it will be to share with the larger group one or two experiences and reflections from your discussion.

1. Archbishop Hughes begins his pastoral letter by talking about the historical realities of race in New Orleans. From your personal history, share how you have experienced the social dynamics of race.

2. Recall and share when you first personally encountered the realities of racism.

3. Archbishop Hughes became aware of the “need to address responsibly the racial undertcurrents to so many issues we face in our community.” How does racism today impact the ability of all people to fully live life?

4. What questions and signs of hope surface for
you as a result of our conversation today?
5. What do you feel God is calling you to do? Prayerfully reflect on this question in light of the Pastoral Plan of Action, pages 13 – 15. We will answer it in session 4.

Large Group Sharing (3 minutes each)
The reporters will share one or two experiences and reflections from the table discussions.

Reading Assignment for Session Two
From the pastoral letter, Made in the Image and Likeness of God:
- Define Racism, paragraphs 16 - 20
- The Church's Teachings, paragraphs 21 - 26
- Our Nation's "Original Social Sin", paragraphs 27 and 28
- Continuing Disharmony, paragraphs 29 - 33

Closing Prayer: Our Family Prayer
Loving and faithful God, through the years the people of our archdiocese have appreciated the prayers and love of Our Lady of Prompt Succor in times of war, disaster, epidemic and illness.
We come to you, Father, with Mary our Mother, and ask you to help us in the battle of today against violence, murder and racism.
We implore you to give us your wisdom that we may build a community founded on the values of Jesus, which gives respect to the life and dignity of all people.
Bless parents that they may form their children in faith. Bless and protect our youth that they may be peacemakers of our time. Give consolation to those who have lost loved ones through violence.
Hear our prayer and give us the perseverance to be a voice for life and human dignity in our community. We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Our Lady of Prompt Succor, hasten to help us.
Mother Henriette Delille, pray for us that we may be a holy family.

SESSION TWO
RACISM'S DAMAGE TO THE INDIVIDUAL AND TO SOCIETY

Opening Prayer
Leader: As we gather, let us remember that we are a community gathered in God's presence.

Let us pray in the name of the Father... Amen.

Scripture Reading: Genesis
1: 27-28, 31a
God created man in his image, in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying: "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth. God looked at everything he had made and he found it very good.
The Word of the Lord.

Silent Reflection
All: "(We) pray that we might, as a Church and a community, become a place welcoming to linguistically, racially and culturally diverse people, a place of beauty, a place of safety, a place of peace, a place for spiritual enrichment and renewal. God grant us the grace, the wisdom and the courage to realize this vision. Amen." (Made in the Image and Likeness of God, page 13, paragraph 59)

Goals of this Session
By the end of this session, we will have:
- explored and understood the meaning of "race" and "racism" and the difference between "racism" and "prejudice."
- reflected on Christ’s teaching through the Magisterium of the Church on honoring the dignity of every human person.
- learned that America's “original sin of racism” is a manifestation of the original sin of our First Parents.
explored some of the different ways that racism continues to fracture our families and communities, both subtly and profoundly.

Today’s Reading
From the pastoral letter, Made in the Image and Likeness of God:
- Defining Racism, paragraphs 16 - 20
- The Church’s Teaching, paragraphs 21 - 26
- Our Nation’s “Original Sin”, paragraphs 27 and 28
- Continuing Disharmony, paragraphs 29 - 33

Questions for Table Discussions
Select a reporter whose task it will be to share with the larger group one or two experiences and reflections from your discussion.

1. Archbishop Hughes says that, “We need to recognize that racism can be both personal and institutional.” Give examples of each.

2. “I have always been uneasy about using the term racism. It has an emotionally charged meaning for many people. The Church, however, is not hesitant to define racism as both a personal sin and a social disorder rooted in the belief that one race is superior to another.” (Archbishop Alfred Hughes, STD, Made in the Image and Likeness of God)

Have you experienced this “unease” in your life? Have you heard the Church’s teaching about the sin of racism clearly explained?”

3. Racism was engrained in our country’s Constitution at the time of its framing. How are the effects of this deep-rooted “original social sin” apparent to you?

4. Can you share how racism causes disharmony in our families and neighborhoods?

5. Have you experienced times when you felt that you were being diminished because of any difference in your appearance, speech, beliefs?

6. Do you think the Church’s teaching on guarding the dignity of each person, regardless of race is clearly taught? Can you share why you feel this way?

7. Can you explain “white privilege”? What is your experience of it? What are some systemic disadvantages that people of color experience?

8. What questions and signs of hope surface for you as a result of our conversation today?

9. What do you God is calling you to do? Prayerfully reflect on this question in light of the Pastoral Plan of Action, pages 13 – 15. We will answer it in session 4.

Large Group Sharing (3 minutes each)
The reporters will share with the larger group one or two experiences and reflections from your discussions.

Reading Assignment for Session Three
From the pastoral letter, “Made in the Image and Likeness of God”:
- Our Archdiocesan Heritage, paragraph 34
- The Witness of Henriette Delille, paragraph 35
- Some Heroes of New Orleans in the 20th Century, paragraphs 36 - 40
- Social Justice Response by the Archdiocese, paragraphs 41 - 43


SESSION THREE
OUR ARCHDIOCESAN HERITAGE AND OUR RESPONSE

Opening Prayer
Leader: As we gather, let us remember that we are a community gathered in God’s presence.

Let us pray in the name of the Father… Amen.

Scripture Reading: Acts 2: 1-13
When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it
filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, “Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his own native language? We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God. They were all astounded and bewildered, and said to one another, “What does this mean?” But others said, scoffing, “They have had too much new wine.”

The Word of the Lord.

Silent Reflection

All: “(We) pray that we might, as a Church and a community, become a place welcoming to linguistically, racially and culturally diverse people, a place of beauty, a place of safety, a place of peace, a place for spiritual enrichment and renewal. God grant us the grace, the wisdom and the courage to realize this vision. Amen.” (Made in the Image of Likeness of God, page 13, paragraph 59)

Goals of This Session

By the end of this session, we will have:

- gained an appreciation for the rich and diverse heritage of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.
- explored stories of courageous people who have stood firm in promoting and defending the dignity of all people.
- imagined what other responses the archdiocese and parishes could initiate to promote racial harmony in our communities.

Today’s Reading

From the pastoral letter, Made in the Image and Likeness of God:

- Our Archdiocesan Heritage, paragraph 34
- The Witness of Henriette Delille, paragraph 35
- Some Heroes of New Orleans in the 20th Century, paragraphs 36 - 40
- Social Justice Response by the Archdiocese, paragraphs 41 - 43

Questions for Table Discussions

Select a reporter whose task it will be to share with the larger group the top three ideas from your sharing on Question #6.

1. What was it about the heroes in “Our Archdiocesan Heritage” that seemed most significant to you?
2. Whom have you known to take a courageous stand to promote or preserve the dignity of others? What did he/she do? Why did it require courage?
3. Can you identify situations today that need to be addressed by “heroes” of racial harmony?
4. Have you ever been part of a project or action that served to preserve or promote the dignity of all people? Will you share that experience?
5. Have you ever lacked the courage to act when you thought that action was needed? What fears or concerns held you back? What type of support would have helped you take action?
6. What ideas do you have for inspiring and organizing the Catholic community to promote racial harmony and social justice? Pick your top three ideas to be shared with the larger group.
7. What questions or signs of hope surface for you as a result of our conversation today?
8. What do you feel God is calling you to do? Prayerfully reflect on this question in light of the Pastoral Plan of Action, pages 13 – 15. We will answer it in session 4.

Large Group Sharing

The reporters will share the top three ideas in response to question #6 from your table discussions.
Reading Assignment for Session Four

From the pastoral letter, *Made in the Image and Likeness of God:*

- The Need of the Church - and of Us as Members - to Respond in this 21st Century, paragraphs 44 - 49
- Repentance, Forgiveness, and Healing, paragraphs 50 - 55
- Embracing All People, paragraphs 56 - 59
- Pastoral Plan of Action, page 13
- Commitments of the Archdiocese, items 1 - 15
- Initiatives for Quality Education, items 1 - 4
- Recommendations for Parishes, items 1 - 7
- Recommendations for All Catholics, items 1 - 7


SESSION FOUR
THE NEED OF THE CHURCH - AND OF US AS MEMBERS - TO RESPOND

What is God Calling Me to Do?

Opening Prayer

*Leader:* As we gather, let us remember that we are a community gathered in God’s presence.

*Let us pray in the name of the Father… Amen.*

Scripture Reading: Col 3: 12-17

Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

*The Word of the Lord.*

Silent Reflection

*All:* “(We) pray that we might, as a Church and a community, become a place welcoming to linguistically, racially and culturally diverse people, a place of beauty, a place of safety, a place of peace, a place for spiritual enrichment and renewal. God grant us the grace, the wisdom and the courage to realize this vision. Amen.”

*(Made in the Image of Likeness of God, page 13, paragraph 59)*

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Goals of Session Four

By the end of this session, we will have:

- reflected upon the wounds caused by racism and racial disharmony.
- begun a process of forgiveness.
- created a list of ideas for promoting racial harmony in our own households and our parishes.
- made commitments to take action for racial harmony.

Today’s Reading

From the pastoral, *Made in the Image and Likeness of God:*

- The Need of the Church - and of Us as Members - to Respond in this 21st Century, paragraphs 44 - 49
- Repentance, Forgiveness, and Healing, paragraphs 50 - 55
- Embracing All People, paragraphs 56 - 59
- Commitments of the Archdiocese, items 1 - 15
- Initiatives for Quality Education, items 1 - 4

Questions for Table Discussions

Select a reporter whose task it will be to live share with the larger group your top three ideas for carrying out the pastoral plan as found in
“Recommendations for All Catholics.”

1. As an individual, how is God calling me to out the “Recommendations for All Catholics”?

2. As a family member, how can I create opportunities to welcome people of varying racial and ethnic backgrounds to my home?

3. As a parishioner, which of the “Recommendations for Parishes” is God calling me to help implement?

4. What further information and resources do I need to live out the “Recommendations for all Catholics”?

5. Who can I encourage to be involved to help implement the “Recommendations for Parishes” and “Recommendations for Individuals”?

6. Does your parish have a Racial Harmony Ministry? If yes, would you consider joining the ministry? If no, would your discussion group consider seeking your pastor’s blessing to become a Racial Harmony Ministry?

7. Having read and discussed the “Recommendations” sections, let us revisit a question from last week. What ideas do you have for inspiring and organizing the Catholic community to promote racial harmony and social justice? Pick your top three ideas to share with the larger group.

Large Group Sharing

The reporters will share with the larger group the top three ideas for carrying out the pastoral plan as found in “Recommendations for All Catholics”.

Turn in to the conveners the written report containing all shared ideas.

Final Reflection

In light of our four weeks of discussion, please share a word or phrase from any of the readings that now resonates with you and connects to our dialogue on racial harmony. How will this reflection lead you into action? Feel at ease to share your reflection and plan.


COMMISSIONING

Leader: Please stand as we say together the pledge that was first taken at the Commissioning of Archdiocesan and Parish Leadership for Accomplishing the Goals of Made in the Image and Likeness of God: A Pastoral Letter on Racial Harmony at St. Louis Cathedral on March 25, 2007.

“I commit myself and all the resources within my area of responsibility to make effective in my daily life and work in the Church the vision and actions expressed in the Pastoral Plan of Action in ‘Made in the Image and Likeness of God’; a Pastoral Letter on Racial Harmony.

I promise to apply myself diligently to the task of promoting, in justice and peace, the equality and dignity of all the children of God as we meet and pray together in our Church and in the wider society. I recognize and embrace my responsibility to love and serve all my brothers and sisters in the Lord, even as He himself loved and served us. I make these promises and commitments this day in the sight of God and of my sisters and brothers in the Church of New Orleans.”

Leader: Let us all go make a difference in our own lives and in the lives of others so that each of us may truly believe that every person is a brother or sister to us and treat each other accordingly in Jesus’ name.

All: Amen.