

SAINT MARY OF THE MOUNT MISSION MINISTRY PRESENTS

A STUDY ON RACIAL DIVIDE

In preparation for our Spring Parish Mission and in accordance with our Pastoral Plan for Saint Mary of the Mount Parish the Mission Ministry Committee is hosting 4 discussion group sessions during Advent on the racial divide in the United States. One of our Pastoral Plan Goals is to “*Improve the understanding of Race Relations within ourselves and the local community*”. The focus will be on two pastoral letters written by Bishop Edward Braxton of Belleville, Illinois.

The Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton Ph.D. S.T.D. is the Bishop of Belleville, Illinois since 2005 (He was appointed a month before Pope John Paul II’s death). An African American, Bishop Braxton is thought of a “conservative” on many issues.

Our aim is to encourage each other to examine the complex racial divide in our country and how it relates to us as Christians.

We will meet in the Sullivan Hall Cafeteria on the following dates (All Tuesdays during Advent):

Nov. 29, Dec. 6, Dec. 13, and Dec. 20 2016. Time: 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM

Below are the titles and links to the Pastoral Letters.

In January 2015, Bishop Braxton wrote a Pastoral Letter titled “*The Racial Divide in the United States: A Reflection for the World Day of Peace 2015*”. This letter is divided into six (6) parts. It also has an accompanying study guide. During Week 1 we will focus on parts 1 through 3. Week 2 we will look at parts 4 through 6.

www.blackcatholicchicago.org/Portals/198/Documents/Racial_Divide_Study_Guide.pdf

In February 2016 Bishop Braxton revisited his previous Pastoral Letter on race as a result of the growing “Black Lives Matter” movement. This Pastor Letter is titled “*The Catholic Church and the Black Lives Matter Movement: The Racial Divide in the United States Revisited*”. This letter is broken up into eight (8) parts. Week 3 will focus on 1 through 4. Week 4 we will look at parts 5 through 8.

<http://www.diobelle.org/%20RACIAL%20DIVIDE%20REVISITED.pdf>

Over the course of the four (4) weeks we will reflect on these letters in an open discussion format. All attendees are encouraged to read the scheduled portions prior to our meetings to be familiar with the letters and be able to fully participate in discussions.

Below are a few questions posed by the study guide:

1. *Are you surprised that the Catholic Church (bishops, religious orders, and institutions) “owned” enslaved human beings?*
2. *How do you think the Catholic Church reconciled this practice with the Gospel of Jesus Christ?*

If you are unable to download and print the above pastoral letters please contact Andy Benchek at abenchek@boordbenchek.com. You do not need to RSVP for this event. However, if you know you will be attending please send Andy an e-mail, or contact the rectory so we can get an idea of how many may be attending. All are welcome. Even if you are unable to attend, you are encouraged to read the letters. They will amply reward you for the time you devote to them.