



HOW TO BE AN ANTI-RACIST FROM A CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE

1) Catholic Thought

“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).

... Every racist act — every such comment, every joke, every disparaging look as a reaction to the color of skin, ethnicity, or place of origin — is a failure to acknowledge another person as a brother or sister, created in the image of God. In these and in many other such acts, the sin of racism persists in our lives, in our country, and in our world.” - **Open Wide Our Hearts, USCCB**

Discussion Question:

Kendi writes, “The only way to undo racism is to constantly identify it and describe it—and then dismantle it.” Why does he believe we need to call out racism when we see it, even if it can be uncomfortable to identify?



2) Catholic Thought:

“The saints did not all begin well, but they ended well.”

-St. John Vianney.

“Life with Christ is a wonderful adventure.”-

St. John Paul II.

“There is no saint without a past, and no sinner without a future.”

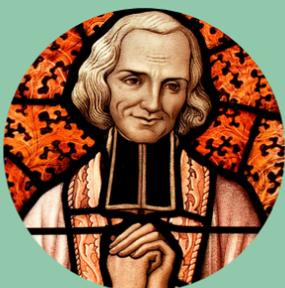
- Saint Augustine.

“The Lord delights in every little step you take.”

- Saint Francis de Sales.

“To begin is for everyone. To persevere is for saints.”

- Saint Josemaría Escrivá



Discussion Question:

We see time and time again in the lives of the Saints that Sainthood is a pathway and a lifelong journey. Similarly, the book’s central message is that the opposite of “racist” isn’t “not racist.” The true opposite of “racist” is antiracist. “The good news,” Kendi writes, “is that racist and antiracist are not fixed identities. We can be racist one minute and an antiracist the next.” What does it mean to have to constantly reaffirm your identity as an antiracist? Is there any benefit to the fact that you can’t just decide you are “not racist” or an antiracist and be done with it?

3) Catholic Thought:

“Equality does not mean uniformity. It is important to recognize the diversity and complementarity of one another’s cultural riches and moral qualities.” **The Church and Racism: Towards a More Fraternal Society, Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace**

“On several occasions the Synod Fathers stressed the particular importance for evangelization of inculturation, the process by which "catechesis 'takes flesh' in the various cultures". Inculturation includes two dimensions: on the one hand, "the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity" and, on the other, "the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures". The Synod considers inculturation an urgent priority in the life of the particular Churches, for a firm rooting of the Gospel in Africa. It is "a requirement for evangelization", "a path towards full evangelization", and one of the greatest challenges for the Church on the Continent on the eve of the Third Millennium.”

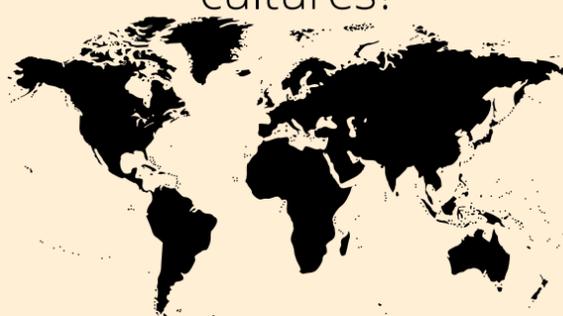
-Pope St. John Paul II, Ecclesia in Africa



The Holy Father is here stating the importance of a process of evangelization called inculturation. Inculturation was central to John Paul’s mission for a New Evangelization, and he spoke of it often. Inculturation is the importance of understanding faith within the context of culture. What he describes here by calling for “the transformation of culture” is to highlight the virtues of that culture while also lovingly seeping away from those that do not fit with Christianity, such as idol worship or human sacrifice. While uplifting those traditions of the culture that make its worship unique, such as dance in some African and Jamaican Liturgies and special honoring of ancestors in Korean and Hispanic cultures. The universality of the faith can be beautiful when brought together and should be celebrated.

Discussion Question:

Why do you think it is so hard for people to not assess other cultures from their own cultural standards? How does doing this trap people in racist ideas? What role can the Church play in celebrating various cultures?



4) Catholic Thought:

“They may be citizens with full rights, yet they are treated like foreigners in their own country. Racism is a virus that quickly mutates and, instead of disappearing, goes into hiding, and lurks in waiting.”

Fratelli Tutti (On Fraternity and Social Friendship) Pope Francis.



Discussion Question:

Kendi closes the book comparing racism and cancer.
What do you think of this comparison?



5) Catholic Thought:

“The sin of Cain finds its remedy in Christ, in his command to love and in the gift of his Holy Spirit that enables us to respond to his call. When Cain struck and killed his brother, the human family was further divided. But Christ heals all divisions, including those that are at the core of racism. It is through his Cross that we learn the greatest lesson about love. On the Cross, Jesus died for the human race (see 2 Cor 5:15). “He is expiation for our sins, and not for our sins only but for those of the whole world” (1 Jn 2:2). Here is our hope! Here is the grace given to us to be healed of this sin of division! Here is the lesson of love.”

Open Wide Our Hearts, USCCB

Discussion Question:

Kendi believes we can defy the odds, heal society of racism, and create an antiracist society. Do you? Why is hope so central to the antiracist movement? Obviously as Christians our hope is found in Jesus Christ. How does hearing the words of the Bishops effect you?

6) Catholic Thought:

- “Recognition of fraternity is not enough. One must go on to effective solidarity between all, in particular between rich and poor”...“Laws are not enough to recognize the dignity of one’s neighbors; racism must be eradicated in the heart.” **The Church and Racism**
- “As individuals we should try to influence the attitudes of others, including members of our own families, by rejecting racial attitudes, stereotypes, racial slurs and jokes”...“We should learn more about how social structures inhibit the economic, educational, and social advancement of the poor”...“We should join in the person commitment to join with others in political efforts to bring about justice for the victims of such deprivation.” **Brothers and Sisters to Us**
- “Education is imperative, since racial prejudice often arises from ignorance; racial diversity in a person’s educational experience can be enriching.”

The Church and Racism

“The laws of the state must protect everyone from unjust discrimination, including non-citizens, and in particular in regard to labor laws.”

The Church and Racism

“Individuals move on many levels and each of us are called to speak in different settings.” **Brothers and Sisters To Us**

We must fight for the new goals of racial economic justice with courage (ibid).

We need to examine our relationship with other nations racial differences should not interfere with our dealing justly and peacefully with all other nations. The private sector should promote genuine development in poor societies, not mere consumerism and materialism (ibid).



Discussion Question:

Read the Action steps we can take per the author on page 231.
Share any thoughts you have looking at the action steps that both the Church and Kendi have presented.