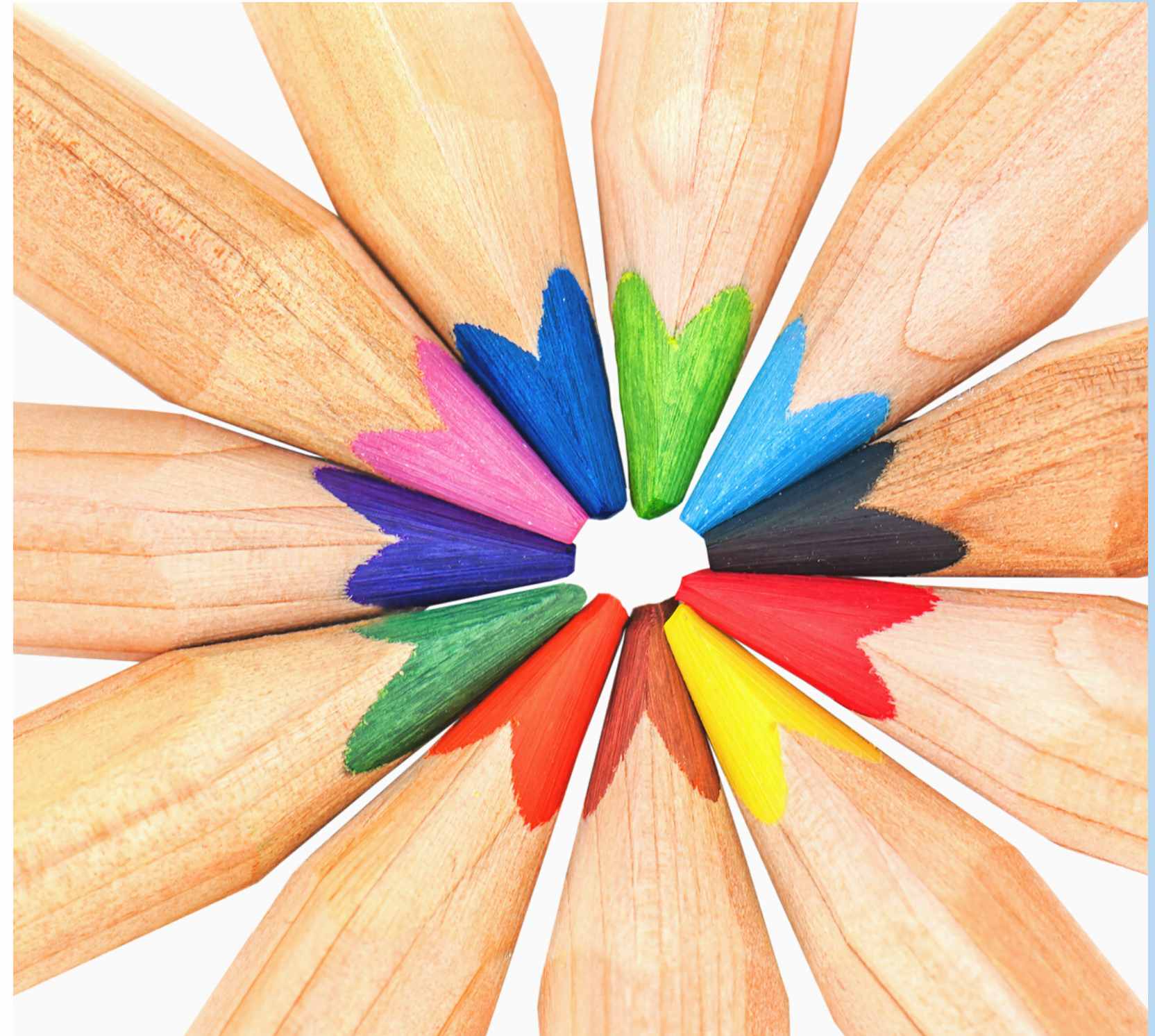


Presented by Kevin M. Dowd

# Teaching Kids to Respect Others: Racism



AUTHOR OF *TEACHING KIDS TO RESPECT OTHERS:  
REFLECTIONS, ACTIVITIES & PRAYERS ON BULLYING AND PREJUDICE*  
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“The Catholic Church is very clear: racism and every form of discrimination based on ‘sex, race, color, social conditions, language, or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God’s design’ (Catechism, par. 1935 and Gaudium et Spes, no. 29).”

— **USCCB, “RESPONDING TO THE SIN OF RACISM,” (2017), P. 12**

**“The Church reproves as  
foreign to the mind of Christ,  
any discrimination against  
[people] or harassment of them  
because of their race, color,  
condition of life, or religion.”**

**— NOSTRA AETATE, #5  
(SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL)**



"Racism is not merely  
one sin among many;  
it is a radical evil..."

— USCCB, "BROTHERS AND  
SISTERS TO US" (1979)







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“Racism is an inner demon. This inner demon infects our soul as a nation, and attacks each of us individually. It is ugly; it is real; and it is sinful.”

— USCCB, “RESPONDING TO THE SIN OF RACISM,” (2017), P. 11



**“The sin of racism is the opposite of love. In committing the sin of racism, we are not loving others. Instead, we are placing others outside of our hearts—way outside. Which is why it is a sin. It is also **why we need to fight racism**, especially in our own hearts. It is a poison that infects our souls. So, the question each of us must ask ourselves each and every day is this: *who have I placed outside of my heart?* And then we need to repent by asking ourselves, *how can I show them that I love them?*”**

— USCCB, “RESPONDING TO THE SIN OF RACISM,” (2017), P. 10



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“The effects of experiencing racism at a young age can be very detrimental and may include depression, anxiety and other health problems, similar to what children who have been abused can experience. Child sexual abuse, racism, and all forms of abuse are intrinsically evil as they fail to recognize the God-given dignity of the human person. By promoting the truth that all people are made in the image of God, we can help to create a culture in which all of God’s children can safely grow in their faith.”

— **USCCB, “RESPONDING TO THE SIN OF RACISM,” (2017), P. 14**

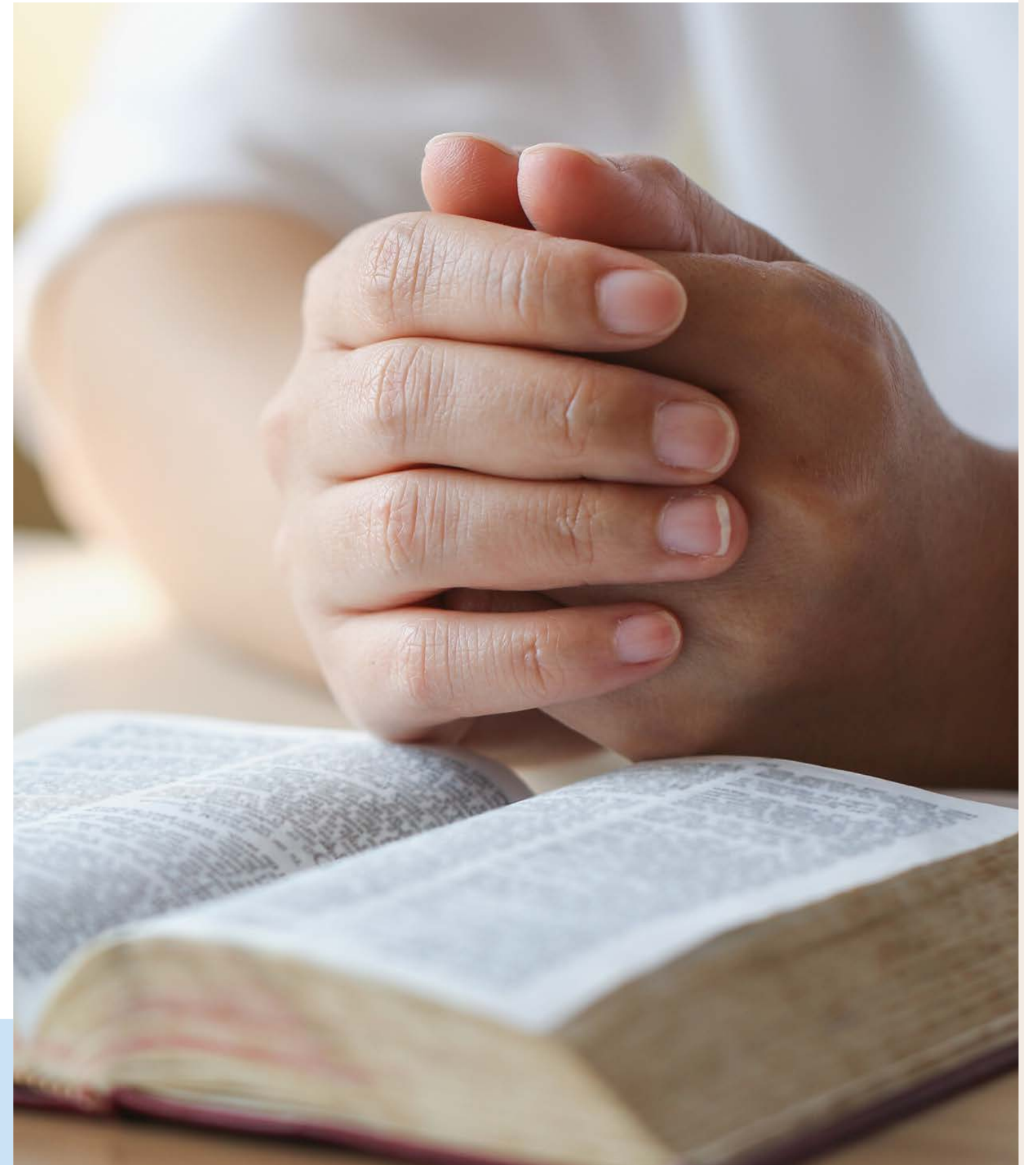


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# Sins of Omission

“Finally, too often racism comes in the form of the sin of omission, when individuals, communities, and even churches remain silent and fail to act against racial injustice when it is encountered.”

— USCCB, “OPEN WIDE OUR HEARTS — THE ENDURING CALL TO LOVE: A PASTORAL LETTER AGAINST RACISM” (2018)



# **Anti- Racism is Pro-Life!**

"...societal realities indicate a need for further catechesis to facilitate conversion of hearts.

Too many good and faithful Catholics remain unaware of the connection between institutional racism and the continued erosion of the sanctity of life...

As bishops, we unequivocally state that racism is a life issue."

**— USCCB, "OPEN WIDE OUR HEARTS," (2018)**





"We cannot tolerate or  
turn a blind eye to racism  
and exclusion in any  
form and yet claim to  
defend the sacredness  
of every human life"

— POPE FRANCIS AFTER  
THE KILLING OF GEORGE FLOYD



**“...the fight to eradicate racism is a pro-life issue.  
Racism is not a thing of the past or simply  
a throwaway political issue when convenient.  
It is a real and present danger that  
must be met head on.”**

**— BISHOP GEORGE V. MURRY(RIP) AND  
THE U.S. CATHOLIC BISHOPS (2020)**





# **“Racism Is a Pro Life Issue”**

**— USCCB, “RESPONDING TO THE  
SIN OF RACISM,” (2017), P. 13**



**RACISM =  
Prejudice  
+ Power**

## **What Do We Mean by Racism?**

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Sr. Patricia Chappell,  
executive director of Pax Christi  
USA, defines racism as "personal  
racial prejudice plus the misuse of  
power by systems and institutions."

# Implicit Bias

— **USCCB, “RESPONDING TO THE SIN OF RACISM,” (2017), P. 11**

“Racism is an inner demon... We are all infected with this inner demon.”



“Racism can often be found in our hearts—in many cases placed there unwillingly or unknowingly by our upbringing and culture. As such, it can lead to thoughts and actions that we do not even see as racist, but nonetheless flow from the same prejudicial root. Consciously or subconsciously, this 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.”

— **USCCB, “OPEN WIDE OUR HEARTS” (2018)**



# The Church's Complicity... and Commitment

"To our shame, Christians have been part of the problem. So, as Christians, we need to be part of the solution."

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— USCCB, "RESPONDING  
TO THE SIN OF RACISM,"  
(2017), P. 14

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# Catholic Complicity in the Sin of Racism

“The truth is that the sons and daughters of the Catholic Church have been complicit in the evil of racism. In his Papal Bull *Dum Diversas* (1452), Nicholas V granted apostolic permission for the kings of Spain and Portugal to buy and sell Africans, setting the stage for the slave trade. Even though subsequent popes strongly renounced and rejected the international slave trade, much to our shame, many American religious leaders, including Catholic bishops, failed to formally oppose slavery; some even owned slaves.... All too often, leaders of the Church have remained silent about the horrific violence and other racial injustices perpetuated against African Americans and others.”

— **USCCB, “OPEN WIDE OUR HEARTS”  
(2018)**



# Recalling & Renewing Our Best History



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“Since the founding of this nation, some of the strongest voices against slavery, injustice, and racism have been the voices of people of faith. From preachers, to clerics, to lay men and women of many different denominations and creeds, they have spoken out against this original sin of our country.”

— **USCCB, “RESPONDING TO THE SIN OF RACISM,” (2017), P. 18**

# Confronting History and Culture

*“History, despite its  
wrenching pain cannot be  
unlived, but if faced with  
courage need not be lived  
again.” –Maya Angelou*

“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.”

— **USCCB, “OPEN WIDE OUR HEARTS” (2018)**



# *A Call to Action*



"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."

"Love compels each of us to resist racism courageously. It requires us to reach out generously to the victims of this evil, to assist the conversion needed in those who still harbor racism, and to begin to change policies and structures that allow racism to persist."

— **USCCB, "OPEN WIDE OUR HEARTS" (2018)**

**“Racism violates [the]... fundamental truth about the human person and therefore it must be fought not only through changing hearts but also through advocacy in the halls of government. This means that the Church must work in the public square defending the dignity of each person, and in a special way. As *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* states well, ‘Loving our neighbor has global dimensions and requires us to eradicate racism.’”**

— USCCB, “RESPONDING TO THE SIN OF RACISM,” (2017), P. 15





“Racism can also be institutional, when practices or traditions are upheld that treat certain groups of people unjustly. The cumulative effects of personal sins of racism have led to social structures of injustice and violence that makes us all accomplices in racism.”

“The roots of racism have extended deeply into the soil of our society. Racism can only end if we contend with the policies and institutional barriers that perpetuate and preserve the inequality—economic and social—that we still see all around us. With renewed vigor, we call on the members of the Body of Christ to join others in advocating and promoting policies at all levels that will combat racism and its effects in our civic and social institutions.”

“What is needed, and what we are calling for, is a genuine conversion of heart, a conversion that will compel change, and the reform of our institutions and society.”

**— USCCB, “OPEN WIDE OUR HEARTS” (2018)**

# Structural Evil and Social Sin

— UNITED STATES  
CONFERENCE OF  
CATHOLIC BISHOPS,  
"BROTHERS AND  
SISTERS TO US" (1979)

"Today in our country men, women, and children are being denied opportunities for full participation and advancement in our society because of their race. The educational, legal, and financial systems, along with other structures and sectors of our society, impede people's progress and narrow their access because they are black, Hispanic, Native American or Asian.

The structures of our society are subtly racist, for these structures reflect the values which society upholds. They are geared to the success of the majority and the failure of the minority. Members of both groups give unwitting approval by accepting things as they are. Perhaps no single individual is to blame. The sinfulness is often anonymous but nonetheless real. The sin is social in nature in that each of us, in varying degrees, is responsible. All of us in some measure are accomplices. As our recent pastoral letter on moral values states: 'The absence of personal fault for an evil does not absolve one of all responsibility. We must seek to resist and undo injustices we have not [caused], least we become bystanders who tacitly endorse evil and so share in guilt in it.'"



# Racism and Economic Injustice

— USCCB, “OPEN WIDE OUR HEARTS” (2018)

“Still, to understand how racism works today, we must recognize that generations of African Americans were disadvantaged by slavery, wage theft, “Jim Crow” laws, and by the systematic denial of access to numerous wealth-building opportunities reserved for others. This has left many African Americans without hope, discouraged, disheartened, and feeling unloved. While it is true that some individuals and families have thrived, significant numbers of African Americans are born into economic and social disparity. The poverty experienced by many of these communities has its roots in racist policies that continue to impede the ability of people to find affordable housing, meaningful work, adequate education, and social mobility. The generational effects of slavery, segregation, and the systemic use of violence—including the lynching of more than 4,000 black men, women, and children across 800 different counties throughout the United States between 1877 and 1950—are realities that must be fully recognized and addressed in any process that hopes to combat racism.”



# The Role of Religious Educators

— USCCB, "OPEN WIDE OUR HEARTS" (2018)

"Here we call on our religious education programs, Catholic schools, and Catholic publishing companies to develop curricula relating to racism and reconciliation...We can also learn from the example of those young people who rise above racist attitudes and model respect."



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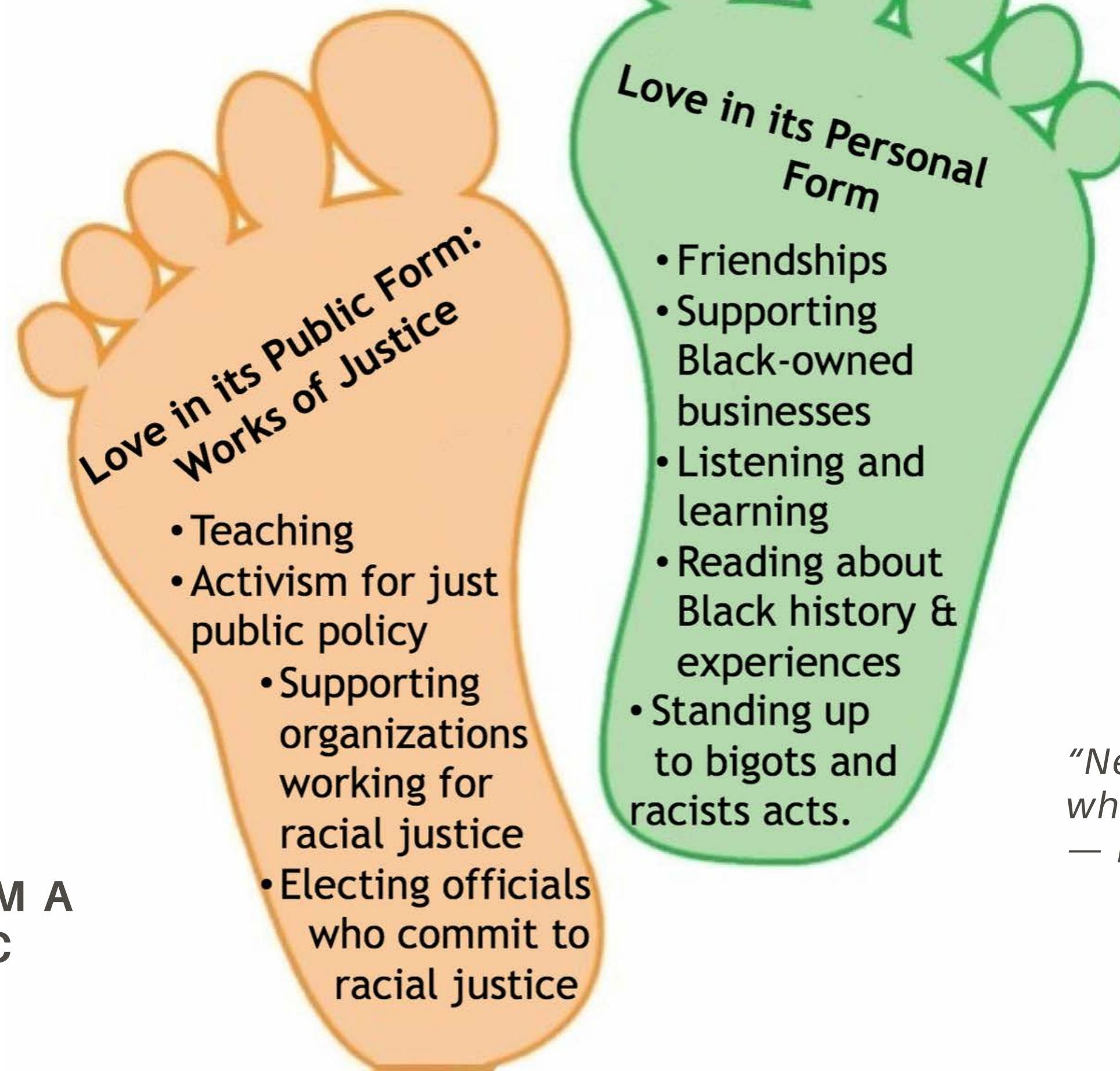
“Children and young people are not naturally racist. They typically learn it from adults. What they see and hear around them remains with them for years, for good or for ill. A fundamental principle of a good education, specifically a Catholic education, is that all persons are made in the image of God and possess an inherent dignity. ‘Since something of the glory of God shines on the face of every person, the dignity of every person before God is the basis of the dignity of man before other men’ (*Guadium et Spes*, 29). Teaching respect for the dignity of every human person is critical to combating racism. A proper education directly confronts the evils of racism which seeks to demean and dehumanize the “other. Instructing young people that every person reflects God’s image is a timeless message of truth and hope. Education that freely communicates the worth and dignity of each human person is a gift for a lifetime.”

— **USCCB, “RESPONDING TO THE SIN OF RACISM,” (2017), P. 9**



\* USCCB GRAPHIC





**\* ADAPTED FROM A  
USCCB GRAPHIC**

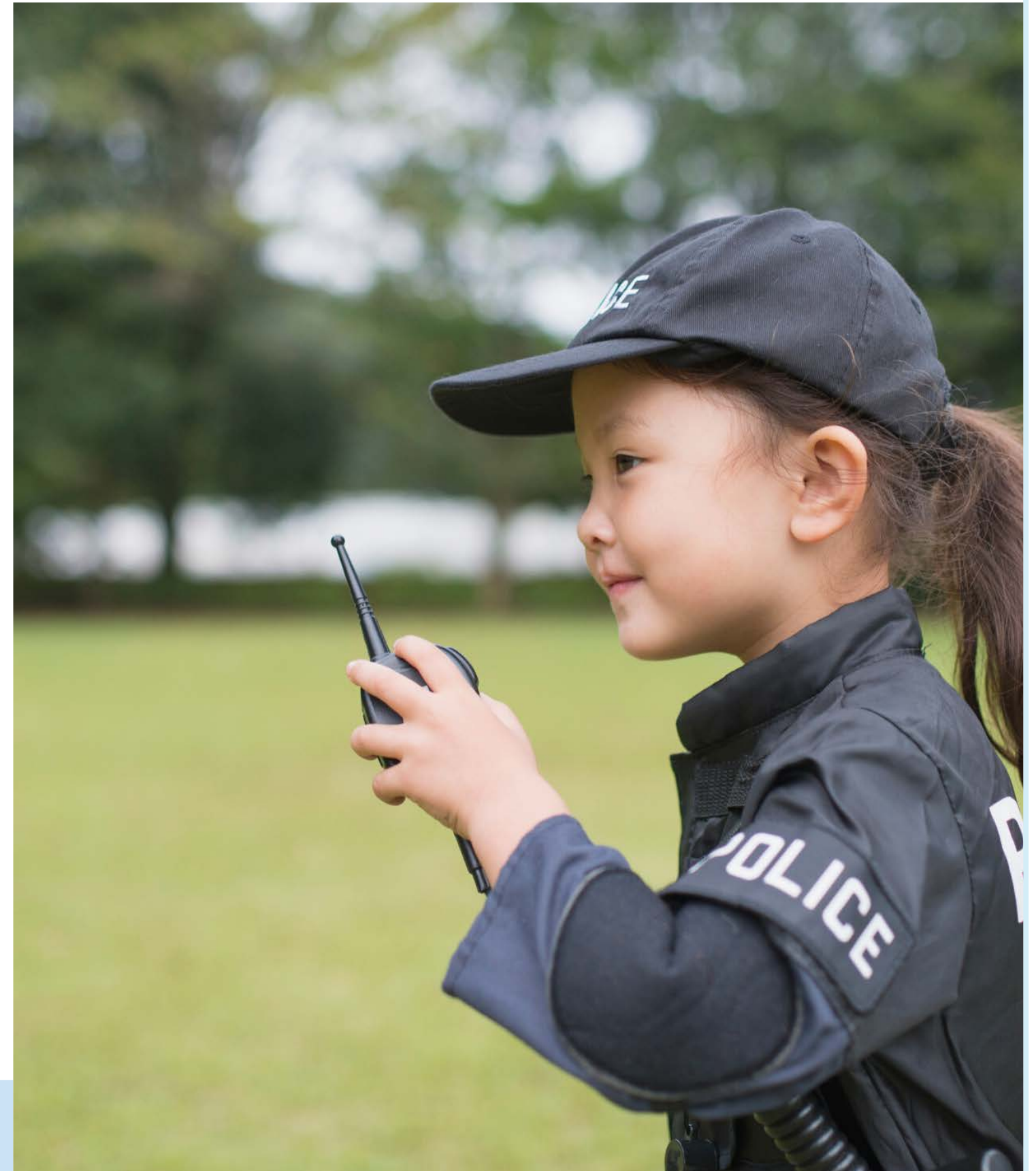
*"Never forget that justice is  
what love looks like in public."  
— Dr. Cornel West*

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# Police Brutality and Violent Responses

“Despite the great blessings of liberty that this country offers, we must admit the plain truth that for many of our fellow citizens, who have done nothing wrong, interactions with the police are often fraught with fear and even danger. At the same time, we reject harsh rhetoric that belittles and dehumanizes law enforcement personnel who labor to keep our communities safe. We also condemn violent attacks against police.”

— USCCB, “OPEN WIDE OUR HEARTS” (2018)





# Black and Blue No More: Dialogue

— USCCB, “CIVILIZE IT: DIGNITY BEYOND THE DEBATE 2020”

*The very  
meaning of  
“diabolical”*

“As Catholics, our strong tradition of social teaching compels us to be actively engaged in the building up of our communities. This is achieved by being involved in the political process—and yet today, many shy away from such involvement because our national and local conversations are filled with vitriol and harsh language, often directed at people themselves. **When personal attacks replace honest debate, no one wins.** This kind of attack, no matter the reason, only serves to further divide our communities.

What is needed is good, honest, civil dialogue. This means that we must treat everyone as worthy of being at the table, worthy of our respect, and worthy of being heard. In short, it means treating everyone as our neighbor.”



— **USCCB, “CIVILIZE IT” (2020)**

“Civil dialogue can best be defined as the ability to enter meaningful conversation with people whose viewpoints may be different from our own, who have a different background or experiences, or who come to a different conclusion about the best way to promote the common good. We enter into civil dialogue because we want to build a community that is rooted in understanding one another. God’s love for each person requires us to remember that someone who disagrees with us is still a beloved child of God who deserves our love, respect, and care.”



point of  
**Truth**  
is true  
with

"An important ingredient to civil dialogue is commitment to the truth. While respecting the dignity of all, we acknowledge that not all viewpoints are equally valid. We have the responsibility to speak truth with love. In addition, all who exercise their freedom of speech have an obligation to ensure that they come to conclusions based on data from credible and reputable sources, and that care is taken to avoid seeking the truth selectively, that is, only when it is convenient to us."

— **USCCB, "CIVILIZE IT" (2020)**

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“Civil dialogue is different than remaining silent in the face of disagreement. Listening to opposing views is a part of seeking clarity and can be a creative process. In civil dialogue, all are invited to bring and share their values, beliefs, and questions. We seek first to understand how our views on a topic are different and why. We ask questions to be sure we understand one another. In thinking critically about how we arrived at our own view points and listening to the experiences of others, we can sometimes arrive at new understanding and even find common ground.”

— **USCCB, “CIVILIZE IT” (2020)**





"Pope Francis has remarked, 'Dialogue allows people to know and understand one another's needs. Above all, it is a sign of great respect, because it puts the person into a stance of listening, and into a condition of being receptive to the speaker's best viewpoints. Secondly, dialogue is an expression of charity because, while not ignoring differences, it can help us investigate and share the common good. Moreover, dialogue invites us to place ourselves before the other, seeing him or her as a gift of God, and as someone who calls upon us and asks to be acknowledged.'"

— USCCB, "CIVILIZE IT" (2020)





*The very work of  
the Holy Spirit!*

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— **POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II, MESSAGE ON THE WORLD DAY OF PEACE, JANUARY 1, 2001**

"Dialogue leads to a recognition of diversity and opens the mind to a mutual acceptance and genuine collaboration demanded by the human family's basic vocation to UNITY. As such, dialogue is a privileged means for building the civilization of love and peace that my revered predecessor Pope Paul VI indicated as the ideal to inspire cultural, social, political and economic life in our time. At the beginning of the Third Millennium, it is urgent that the path of dialogue be proposed once again to a world marked by excessive conflict and violence, a world at times discouraged and incapable of seeing signs of hope and peace."



**“Just like any authentic human connection, the process of dialogue is complicated, often uncomfortable, and requires vulnerability and trust. We must rely on our faith in Christ who taught us that everyone is truly our neighbor.”**

— USCCB, “CIVILIZE IT” (2020)

**Kevin M. Dowd**

# Teaching Kids to Respect Others

REFLECTIONS,  
ACTIVITIES  
*and* PRAYERS  
ON **BULLYING**  
*and* **PREJUDICE**

**Kevin M. Dowd**

## Teaching Kids to Respect Others - Reflections, Activities & Prayers on Bullying and Prejudice

The epidemic of bullying and disrespecting others fills the news each day. In this excellent and important book, Kevin Dowd offers catechists and parents practical and prayerful ways to help our children learn about and deal with issues of respect, bullying, and prejudice.

**FOR MORE IDEAS, ESPECIALLY RELATED TO  
TEACHING ANTI-PREJUDICE HABITS AND  
PERSPECTIVES TO CHILDREN, PLEASE CHECK OUT  
MY BOOK FILLED WITH ACTIVITIES, SCRIPTURE,  
AND REFLECTIONS.**

[www.bfaithr.co/TeachingKidsToRespectOthers](http://www.bfaithr.co/TeachingKidsToRespectOthers)



On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus.

"Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

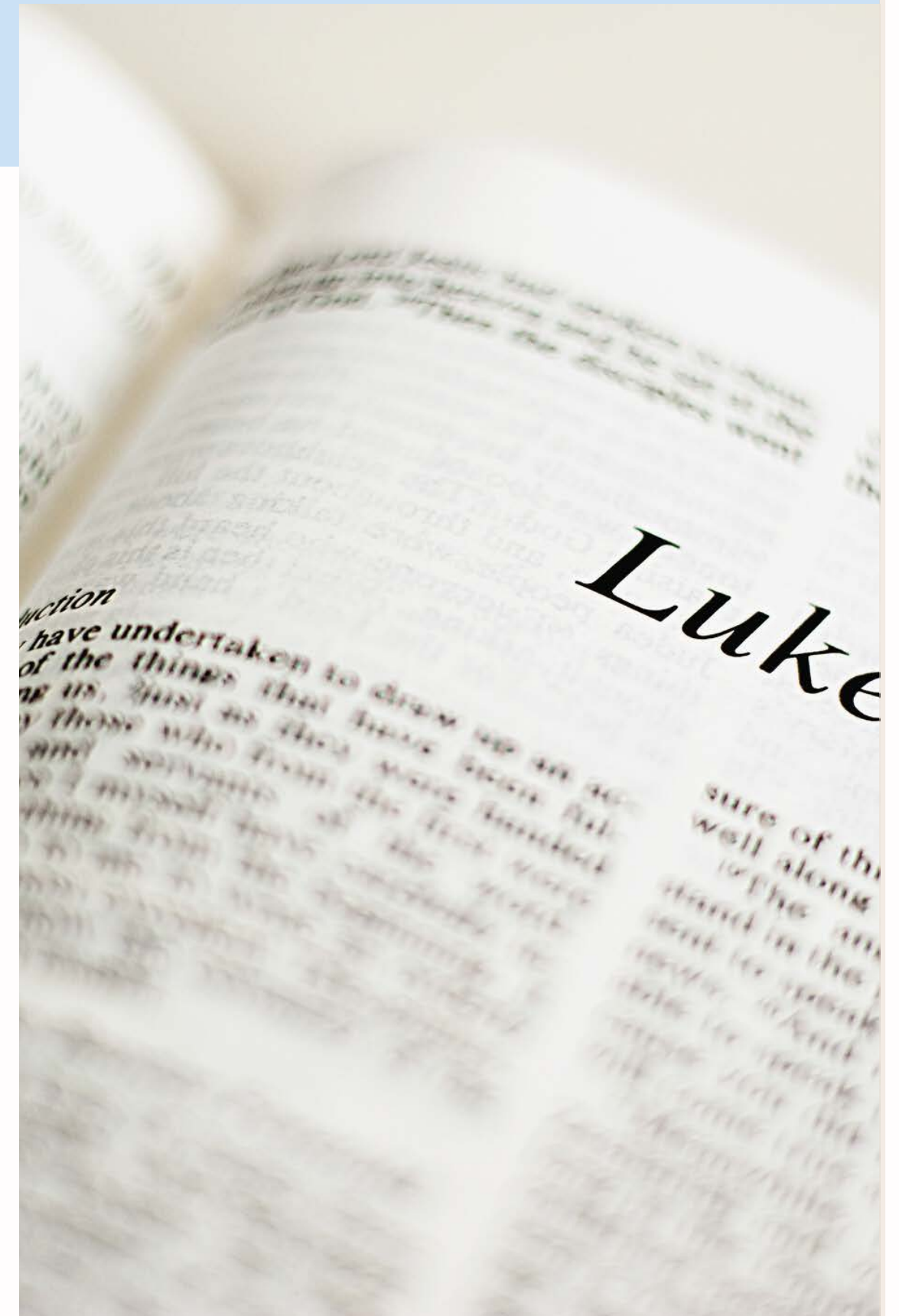
"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind' and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

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— **LUKE 10:25-28 (NABRE)**





**“May Jesus Christ, who  
conquered sin and  
death, help us build a  
culture of life where  
everyone is cherished.”  
Amen!**

— USCCB, “RESPONDING TO THE  
SIN OF RACISM,” (2017), P. 13

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