



Love One Another 1: Laura Jenkins, 2008. Used with permission

Assembly 2022

The Passionists of Holy Cross Province **Statement on Cultural and Racial Diversity** **Executive Summary**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2021, the Cultural and Racial Diversity Committee was formed in the Province to create a Statement on cultural and racial diversity. This Statement would offer guidance and development to our Province ministries and provide guiding principles to motivate and direct our ministries to remain relevant and develop effective ways in reaching out to the local Church.

Three key convictions emerged from the work of the Committee that shape our understanding of the Statement and provide a framework for interpreting it.

1. The Statement reflects, and hopefully will continue to inspire, a Spirit-led cultural shift already underway in Holy Cross Province. Since this demands that we continually “read the signs of the times” in order to discern what God is asking of us now, the Statement is only the beginning of what must be an ongoing process.
2. This process of implementing the Statement in the Province should be undertaken as an individual and communal act of prayer and contemplation for the sake of the crucified of today and for discerning what it means for the Passionist Family of Holy Cross Province “to preach the Word of the Cross in season and out of season” (*Const.* 1).
3. The method by which the Statement is presented to the Province (retreat centers, parishes, local communities, etc.) is crucial to the success of the process. Knowing the impetus and origin of the Statement, understanding why it is urgent that the Province consider it now and the expectations of the Province must be clear to the Passionist Family of Holy Cross Province.

A. **We are a Multicultural Passionist Family**

The Passionist Family of Holy Cross Province actively promotes cultural and racial diversity for the sake of honoring God’s intention from the first moment of creation and for advancing the reign of God. We do not see cultural and racial diversity as a burden but rather as something to celebrate and embrace. We believe that every human being brings something unique and unrepeatable of God to life in the world, and thus possesses a dignity and sacredness that should always be respected.”

B. The Sin of Racism

U.S. Bishops 2018 [*Open Wide Our Hearts*](#), (2018)

1. “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”.
2. Because racism “can often be found in our hearts” and “can also be institutional”; because the “cumulative effects of personal sins of racism have led to social structures of injustice and violence that makes us all accomplices in racism” (2-3); and because this “evil causes great harm to its victims, and it corrupts the souls of those who harbor racist or prejudicial thoughts” (4), we are called to “a genuine conversion of heart, a conversion that will compel change and the reform of our institutions and society.”
3. This conversion demands scrutinizing and transforming our attitudes, priorities, perceptions, actions and practices, not only individually, but also communally and institutionally. True conversion must be preceded by *consciousness raising*, i.e. waking up and becoming aware of something we did not see before, and allowing that newly born awareness to change the way we see, judge and act. The Passionist Family of Holy Cross Province, counting on the grace of God, commits to an ongoing process of *consciousness raising* and *conversion*.

C. ***We are Called to Work for the Continued Restoration of Shalom, Consciousness raising, Conversion and Repentance of Where We May Have Failed.***

1. In light of the divinely bestowed sacredness of every person, and as a way to participate in God’s work of overcoming the pernicious power of sin, God called the Israelites to be a people of justice and liberation, and to live in the joyous freedom of the children of God. They were to seek justice, liberation, and the joyous freedom of the children of God especially for the poor and oppressed, the marginalized and disenfranchised, and were to work for the continued restoration of *Shalom*, the Hebrew word for peace that describes a world in which all men and women, thanks to justice and love, affirmation and respect, know wholeness, well-being, and fullness of life. Every member of the Passionist Family of Holy Cross Province shares this call.
2. There are many among us today who continue to feel that they count for nothing and have no place at the table. We are called to “love thy neighbor as yourself” and that call must extend to every person we encounter. The sheer number of people who feel abandoned in this world shamefully testifies that we often fail in this call from God. The communion of life and love to which God calls us, and to which Jesus shows us the way, will remain a hopelessly impossible ideal unless we recognize, transform, and repent the

many ways we do not bother to love. The Passionist Family of Holy Cross Province, counting on the grace of God, commits to an ongoing process of consciousness raising, conversion, and repentance for the times we may have failed.

D. *We Passionists have a Special Call to “the greatest and most overwhelming work of God’s love”.*

1. The power of the crucified Christ must enter our own minds and hearts to illumine and eradicate any attitudes of cultural and racial superiority so that we can build up, rather than impede, the Kingdom of God. We believe, too, that the “Christian community is founded on the love of Christ, who by His Cross, ‘tore down the wall of separation’ and made all one people” (*Const*, #26). We ask forgiveness for the times, in our life together or through our ministries, that we have added to what separates us rather than do our part to what brings us together.
2. The Passionist Family of Holy Cross Province, counting on God’s grace, commits to helping one another, as well as those to whom we minister, cultivate the moral and spiritual vision, shown to us most fully in Jesus, through which we will continue to welcome, respect, love, and befriend persons of all races and cultures for the sake of the just and beloved community to which God calls every human being. We need peoples of every race and culture even to begin to grasp the redemptive meaning of the Incarnation and the boundlessness of God’s love.

E. *We are Called to Take Action.*

The Passionist Family desires to manifest the fullness and beauty of the reality of our multicultural incarnation. We, therefore, commit to a process of consciousness raising, genuine conversion of heart and repentance for where we have failed, and to the reform of our institutions, Province and society that it compels. We acknowledge that this means:

1. Moving beyond our comfort zones, out into the margins where we will surely find our crucified Lord and the “Crucified of today.”
2. Condemning racism, asking for forgiveness for the times our Province has participated in acts of unintended racism and taking responsibility for correcting its injustices and healing the harms it has caused.
3. Working to form relationships with those we might regularly avoid, going beyond ourselves, opening our minds and hearts to value and respect the experience of those who have been harmed by the evil of racism.
4. Undertaking this journey together as a multicultural Passionist Family, we commit to learning from our personal and communal histories. We may be unaware of the unimaginable damage that racism caused those people of color and diverse cultures.

We need to listen to them when they express their trauma they suffered on account of injustice, so that, together, we may truly become brothers and sisters, children of God.

5. Pledging to be a public witness to the Church's commitment to end racism. We understand that the work of cultural and racial diversity is not a static achievement; it is life-long work that we must commit to each and every day. We are encouraged knowing that we *"don't need to be free of racism to be an anti-racist. Anti-racism is the commitment to fight racism wherever you find it, including in [ourselves.]"* (Ijeoma Oluo).

F. Pledges/commitments for each Holy Cross Province location to consider and implement.

The consciousness raising and acknowledgments brought about by our contemplation of the Scriptures, Catholic teaching, the witness of St. Paul of the Cross and the Passionist charism, along with our discernment of the "signs of the times," calls us to commit to the actions contained in Section E above. In addition to these essential steps, we will also consider the 13 pledges contained in the full document. Each location would make appropriate pledges for itself and included among those could be:

1. Commitment to ensure hospitable environments for all people.
2. Participation in a culture of encounter where we spend time with people of diverse race and culture.
3. To affirm and model anti-racism in liturgies, retreat talks and homilies.
4. To recognize systemic racism as shown in the inequality of opportunities in all society and commit to educating ourselves on the history and presence of systemic racism in our ministries and ministry locations.
5. To model inclusion of the voices of persons of diverse races and cultures in shaping our organizational structures.
6. To set concrete goals for each of the above commitments and conduct regular review and self-assessment of our progress.