



# NDICE NEWS

NATIONAL DIACONATE INSTITUTE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

JUNE 2021

Promoting the Continuing Education of Deacons

VOLUME 5 • NO. 5

## It's Been Fun!



**G**reetings from the Midwest. I pray this last NDICE Newsletter from my desk to yours finds you and your family well. We should all be slowly coming out of the safety and security of our homes and finding the world is still out there. The

world filled with all the problems and tribulations we left about 14 months ago. Let us not forget the ones we lost during this COVID-19 Pandemic. Please continue to pray for our neighbors who are still contracting the disease. Most people fear this bug will be around, in one form or another, for many years to come. Stay educated and stay safe.

As Marlene and I look back over this past three years we are utterly amazed at the great people we have had the good fortune to meet, work with, and pray with. What a profound blessing. Thank you! Thank You for your support and prayers. We were blessed to have a great group of officers and members willing to step up and assist. I pray that you will extend the same spirit of service to our incoming President Deacon Max Roadruck. Dcn Max will assume the presidency in July. He is already laying out plans for the 2022 NDICE Conference at Xavier University.

Meanwhile, Dcn Standridge has agreed to continue in his position until the 2023 Conference. Be thinking about and consider running for one of the officer positions. Please review the NDICE BYLAWS posted on our webpage at [www.NDICE.net](http://www.NDICE.net), drop down – 'About Us.'

Please continue to monitor our website for current information. I look forward to seeing you at our 2022 National Diaconate Institute for Continuing Education Conference the third weekend in July.

Peace,  
Dcn. John

## Changing of the Guard

### Greetings to all



I am **Max Roadruck** the incoming president. This has been a difficult couple of years with no conferences for two years because of the pandemic. But things seem to be looking up. The Dayton newspaper reported that there were only 566 new cases for yesterday (24 May 2021). Air travel seems to be getting better and travel in general seems to be improving. Now, at least for us in the Cincinnati Archdiocese, we can remove our masks if we have received at least one vaccine shot. And I have noticed a significant increase in mass attendance. Overall things seem to be improving—thanks be to God and all the hard work being done by all.

Currently it looks like we will be able to finally have our in-person conference in 2022. It takes a lot of work and prayers to make our conferences possible. I am hopeful that we will have a successful conference next year and looking forward to seeing familiar and new faces. Praying for all to have a good year until we meet in July.

I think we all owe a debt of gratitude to Deacon John Fridley and all of his team of officers and directors for guiding us through the last two years under less than perfect circumstances.

We thank them for their service to NDICE and pray for their futures.

Deacon Max



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# May 4th Board Meeting Minutes

By Secretary Deacon Joe Standridge All Board Members in attendance no role call taken

All attendees notified that meeting was being recorded with no objection  
Meeting Started 2:08 PM CST  
President Deacon John Fridley led the opening prayer.

## MINUTES REVIEW

Minutes of last meeting were reviewed  
Deacon John F noted that there were some zeros missing on the typed minutes  
Deacon Joe agreed to fix those numbers  
Motion to Accept Minutes by President-Elect Deacon Max Roadruck, seconded by Wives Rep. Rhonda Heim, Minutes accepted by unanimous voice vote.

## OLD BUSINESS — 2022 Conference

Deacon Max — have two speakers signed up for next year. Still waiting to hear from a couple more to round out the conference. It was agreed to follow the 2019 schedule for the 2022 confence.

Deacon Tim — Monday and Tuesday Mass must be at 8 AM and we can't deviate from that. Morning prayer would be held in Cintas Center following the Mass.

Wednesday could have Mass between 9 and 11:30 because their Mass starts at 11:30

Deacon Max — we could have a 10:15 Mass on Wednesday and installation of officers immediately following Mass.

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Discussion on officer positions and how to address as the bylaws did not anticipate a pandemic.

Discussed the bylaws and agreed that we could make decisions based on current bylaws without needing a bylaws change.

Deacon John F — leave President Elect vacant and elect in 2022.

Deacon Max takes over officially in July 2021 I will be past president and fill the president elect position to help Max and then leave in 2022 after a new President-Elect is elected at that meeting.

Deacon Joe volunteered to stay on as Secretary for the next two years.

Deacon John H — Agreed stay on as Treasurer for next two years.

Rhonda — discussion about wives' representative. It was decided that associate

members are wives and elect the wives' representative. Rhonda Pat and Geri will work together to address this process and discuss at next meeting.

Ladies representative will be due next year in 2022.

Deacon Hank noted that the treasure and secretary are elected in odd and even years according to article 5 of bylaws.

Deacon John F — secretary elected in odd number years and treasurer is elected in the even number years.

Deacon Joe — make a motion that based on the bylaws and due to pandemic that Deacon Max assumes his position in July 2021, the present secretary would remain in his position for two more years, and position of treasure would be for one more year.

Deacon Max seconded the motion and motion approved by voice vote.

## TREASURER REPORT

Discussion about how much Deacon Max would have for next conference. Possibly need at least \$10,000 in account. Xavier requires 50 percent but usually due by June 1st so we should have registration money to cover that cost. Discussion on PPP money and why not qualified.

## NEW BUSINESS

Deacon Max — need to leave shortly and will use the schedule for this year for layout. Will talk with Deacon John F to discuss content for next conference.

Deacon John F — we should use the 2020 schedule to plan the 2022 schedule discussion and the program on Racial justice as the theme.

Deacon Ken was breaking up and would send us an email to let us know what he was trying to say.

Deacon John F - make a motion that I think this group can approve. Add editor of Newsletter to the Board. Discussion about the new board position.

Deacon Joe — we need to consider the term for the position and how that will work. Discussion of new position is such that they serve at the pleasure of the board members as per Deacon John F.

Deacon Joe — Deacon Max will be asked

to provide detailed agenda for next meeting.

## GOOD OF THE ORDER

Deacon Hank - May 23rd is my 45th anniversary of my ordination as a Deacon.

Deacon John F — Congratulations from us all. Perhaps you could write up an article on your 45-year journey as a Deacon.

NEXT MEETING —Tuesday July 13th 2 PM CST  
Deacon Gerry — Newsletter due out on June 1st, need any articles for newsletter by May 20th to add to newsletter.

Discussion held on how to contact all the Deacons for next year conference. Rhonda to work with Geri and Pat and possibly contact wives of Deacons via email about the conference. Deacon Gerry stated we can give the wives a column in the newsletter. Pat said that whatever we put in letter to wives we can included in column in newsletter. The newsletter goes out to 19,000 Deacons.

Closing Prayer by Deacon Hank  
Meeting ended at 3:02 CST

## NDICE NEWS

June 2020

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[www.ndice.net](http://www.ndice.net)

Deacon Wives,

Happy Spring! It was great to get to celebrate Easter this year with people in the church. Can you believe it has been nearly 2 years since we have been seen each other? Unfortunately, it's going to be another year before we can gather in person again. We hope you are doing well and staying healthy.

Many ministries have been shut down for a time. We hope that as things open up, you find yourselves once again able to minister as you used to, teaching, singing, praying with and visiting parishioners, helping and supporting our husband's ministries along with all the other good works we do.

How are things going for you? How did you cope with all the changes? Here's a little about what we have experienced.



From Rhonda Heim:

With the Pandemic we all found ourselves in such unique times. When our Catholic Church closed, as with everyone else who does ministries, I tried to keep carrying on as best as I could virtually supporting my ongoing ministries; I don't think that is anything unusual.

What I found I was doing more than usual was looking for those who I knew who lived alone, or who were childless, or who were estranged from their children, or who for some reason would not have people who might reach out to them. All I could think about was how alone and lonely they might be, and so I spent a lot of hours calling or emailing just to say hello and to let people know I was thinking of them. I renewed some old friendships and shared some old memories. Eventually the Stewardship Committee from the Parish took up the Ministry for those older parishioners on their own. I still reach out to those not leaving home.



From Geri Hough: Pandemic Sacraments

We were right in the middle of RCIA when everything was closed. We had just celebrated the Rite of Election with the Archbishop and in two weeks we were no longer able to go to Mass!

We tried to be creative. ZOOM meetings, email, texts and mailed cards of encouragement were about the best we could do. AND! In the middle of all that we were finishing building a brand-new church! The old space could barely squeeze in 250 people and now we had a huge 900 worshipper capacity and unable to open the doors.

Nevertheless, we persevered. We prayed daily to the Blessed Mother and all the catechumen/candidate chosen saints to bless our

fledgling little group of believers. On May 31st, 2020 we welcomed the brave few who would return to mass in person.

On June 20, 2020 we at last, baptized adults and children and welcomed new members to the Catholic Church from other Christian faith traditions.

Then nearly a year later in April 2021, we had a tremendous Holy Saturday celebration (albeit with masks and social distancing) and baptized and welcomed even more believers. Today, we are at 100% capacity, will say goodbye to masks on May 22nd and at that date offer the cup at Communion and once again extend the sign of peace with a handshake or hug.



From Pat Klinglesmith:

As we began looking to re-open our churches and have Mass again in May of 2020, I was part of a group tasked with figuring out the sanitization procedures, and how it would all need to work to safely allow people back in church. We trained ushers and parishioner volunteers to clean and sanitize the entire gathering area, restrooms and worship/sanctuary spaces after each Mass. My husband, Greg dubbed us the Ministers of Microbiology. How many of you have become Ministers of Microbiology at your parish? I'm looking forward to the day I can give up this new title and we don't have to clean the entire church four times each weekend.

### New Face Book Group – NDICE WIVES

Share with us your pandemic stories. We have started a Facebook group called **NDICE Wives**. A place where we can share stories, ideas and generally stay in touch. We look forward to hearing your stories.

"We will never forget the strangeness of 2020, we will mourn our beloved dead, we will live in constant gratitude for health care workers and all who helped and sustained us all during these trying times."

But now, as we listened to the Acts of the Apostles during the blessed Easter season, we recall the new church of that apostolic time and we reflect this just may be a "new" church for our time. We lift our hearts in joy and gratitude.

Blessings to all of you from your NDICE Wives Representatives,

Rhonda Heim, Geri Hough and Pat Klinglesmith



A Case Study

# Racial Healing at the Parish Level

<https://www.catholiccommonground.org/>

Richard K. Taylor with the assistance of LaVonne France – September 2000

Since 1997, we at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Philadelphia have been engaged in a parish-wide racial healing process. Because of this, we know that differences in theology and religious practice are not the only divisions that can fracture common ground among Catholics.

Tensions between the races, especially between Blacks and Whites, also can be a potent cause of fissures. This is true even among people sharing the same worshipping community and beliefs. However, creative organizing, backed by prayer, love, and faith can create powerful energies to confront the ugly demon of racism and begin to cast it out. The purpose of this article is to share our experience in order to draw out insights and lessons that may be helpful to other

parishes wanting to pursue racial justice and reconciliation.

### HISTORY OF ST. VINCENT PARISH

First, here is some background on St. Vincent's, a church which currently has about 1500 members. It was founded in 1851 and is located in Germantown, a poor and working class section of Philadelphia whose population is more than eighty-five percent Black. St. Vincent's membership, however, is eighty-five percent White. One of the main reasons for this disparity is the history of racial prejudice and discrimination in the Catholic Church, both locally and nationally.

As was true with other parishes, Black Catholics for many decades were not made to feel welcome at St. Vincent's. Similarly, few Catholics greeted or supported Black


home-seekers when they moved into the neighborhood. Instead, the Blacks were met with hostility and rocks thrown through their windows. Their children could not attend the segregated parish school.

In 1912, when Black children were forced to stand at the end of the line to receive First Holy Communion, disheartened Black

*Creative organizing, backed by prayer, love, and faith can confront the ugly demon of racism.*


members, with the help of Mother Katharine Drexel, petitioned for and founded their own church, St. Catherine of Siena. When the archdiocese finally closed St. Catherine's in 1993, the wound black Catholics had received

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## Society of St. Lawrence Deacon Pins


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# 45 Years of Diaconal Service

By Hank Babin



It is hard to believe that these past 45 years have flown by so quickly.

On May 23, 1976, ten men said yes to the Lord at St. Francis de Sales Church in Houma, LA. The Gospel for ordination, from John, was proclaimed and we were awe struck by the words, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you should ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you. This I command you, to love one another." (John 15: 16-17)

We were incardinated in the Archdiocese of New Orleans at the time of ordination. The class was divided into two groups, those living in the Metropolitan New Orleans area and our group of ten in the Houma/Thibodeaux area. The diaconal program at that time was a two-year program that met twice a week year-round. The men in New Orleans met at Notre Dame Seminary on Mondays and Wednesdays and the men in Houma/Thibodeaux met at St. Francis de Sales Church in Houma on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Some of the same instructors that taught in New Orleans also taught us in Houma. After ordination, we formed our own

continuing formation program that met regularly to continue to grow in knowledge and support for our various ministries.

About a year after ordination, the Diocese of Houma/Thibodeaux was created, and we were incardinated into that diocese. After serving as deacon for sixteen years at St. Bernadette Church in Houma, I retired from the school system and accepted the position of principal at Sacred Heart School in Walls, MS. My wife, Charlene, and I moved to Olive Branch, MS where I served in the Diocese of Jackson as deacon at Queen of Peace Church for twenty-four years. Although I am retired from the Diocese of Jackson, and am still incardinated in that diocese, for the past five years I have been serving in the Diocese of Memphis, TN, at St. Brigid Church.

Quite a bit has happened during these past forty-five years, mostly good but some came with grief. Of the ten ordained in my class there are only two of us still alive.

Since moving to Mississippi, I have lost my only child and my wife and several family members and close friends. On the brighter side, I have also had the privilege of witnessing

marriages and baptisms for family and friends.

During the forty-five years since ordination my ministries have included, baptism preparation and baptisms, marriage preparation and witnessing marriages, RCIA and religious education, visiting shut ins, working with the St. Vincent de Paul Society, funerals and burial, Oversees Mission Appeals for the Passionists, Domestic Mission Appeals for the Diocese of Jackson, and, of course, various liturgical functions. I also have a ministry to assist widows whereby I mow their lawns if they are not able to do so. I currently have four lawns that amounts to four acres a week.

Being a strong believer in continuing formation, I have been actively involved with the National Diaconate Institute for Continuing Education, (NDICE), since 1979. I have served as President-Elect, President, Treasurer and am currently the Executive Secretary, and emcee of the Follies. Not being able to meet last year and again this year has been quite a disappointment as I look forward to seeing and sharing with friends, old and new. I look forward to NDICE meeting in 2022 and encourage all deacons and wives to consider attending.

When I began my ministry at St. Brigid, I was one of four deacons. As of now, I am the only one left. The other three deacons have either moved to other areas or retired. I was asked by a parishioner if I was going to retire also. I responded, "I am shooting for fifty and hopefully beyond".

"Laissez Le Bon Temps Rouler" – "Let The Good Times Roll"

Deacon Henry J. "Hank" Babin

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in 1912 was only deepened, creating suspicion and resentment that has lasted to the present.

Ironically, another reason for the disparity is the exciting, Vatican II-style renewal in liturgy, lay participation, service to the poor and commitment to peace and justice that has transformed St. Vincent's over the last two decades. St. Vincent's has become a "magnet parish," drawing participants from seventy different zip codes in the Philadelphia metropolitan area. Many of these new members come from the suburbs and are White. Today, Black membership at St. Vincent's is slowly growing, but given its history of racism and the magnetic attraction of the parish for White Catholics, it is no wonder that Black Catholics are in the minority.

Our African American Leadership Ministry (AALM) is an interracial group in the parish charged with keeping before parishioners the concerns of people of color. In the early to mid-nineties, it sponsored many parish workshops and speakers on race relations. However, these events reached only a small portion of the membership.

#### ARTICULATING THE GOAL

Desiring to have much wider impact, in February 1997 the AALM sent a detailed,

written proposal to the parish council and staff, outlining a long-term process for racial healing. The goal, they said, was to bring into being: "A Christian community where all people find a safe environment to examine and overcome their prejudices, and where those who suffer racial prejudice and discrimination feel truly welcomed and accepted, have their gifts and culture valued and included, and find solidarity in their struggle for equality."

The proposal included a faith-based rationale, rooted in Catholic theology and social teaching. It also had a twenty-one step timeline, outlining the process the AALM believed would move the parish toward the goal. After much serious discussion with AALM (which brought some small changes to the proposal), the council and staff approved the process in April 1997. Then, they asked AALM to provide leadership for carrying it out.

I will never forget the meeting when we realized what we had gotten ourselves into. We had been somewhat busy with occasional speakers and workshops in the past, but this would take an enormous commitment of time and energy. We held hands around our meeting table and prayed hard for the wisdom and strength to see this through.

The first lesson we learned, therefore, was

the importance of knowing what you want and articulating it clearly. In addition, it is important to have the patience to dialogue with the parish leadership and the humility to accept valid proposals for change. Just as vital is commitment—taking responsibility to set the process in motion and to oversee its implementation. Most important of all is to ask for God's help all the way **along**.

#### AN EMERGING CRISIS

A crisis emerged almost immediately, which nearly prevented the racial healing process from even getting off the ground. Members of the AALM decided to meet together for a retreat, believing that we should "try out" the process before introducing it to the parish. The retreat was a disaster.

A large gap in views appeared between White and Black participants. White members made statements which came across to Black members as expressions of unconscious racism. At times, White members angered Black participants by seeming to casually dismiss their views. ("How can you be sure the store detective was being racist when he followed you around?") Some White members were taken aback by the anger and vehemence with which some Black members spoke. At the

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planned “celebration” dinner after the retreat, Blacks and Whites sat in stony silence or tried desperately to make polite conversation.

In the week following the retreat, many AALM members, both Black and White, decided that it would be too painful to continue to work together. Rumors of resignations flew. Then some of the members recalled a paper that Anita Foeman, an African American diversity trainer, had handed out at one of her workshops at St. Vincent’s.

The paper describes three basic stages in the development of community and collaboration across racial lines. The first stage is superficial pseudo community—polite niceness, where no one steps on anyone’s toes or raises difficult issues. People want to avoid conflict or the perception by others that they are prejudiced or overly angry.

Stage two, and this was the most important insight, is chaos and emptiness. This comes when people determine to break through the superficiality, voice their opinions, and face the real issues that racism raises. Conflict emerges. Emotions of anger and trepidation come out. Participants feel that they are going backward, away from loving community. The problems raised seem overwhelming or unsolvable. But if people can hang on through the “chaos” stage, undergo self-examination, share fears and vulnerabilities, admit prejudices, express willingness to change and speak the truth in love, chaos can give way to stage three—real community.

As we reminded each other of this insight, we began to say, “Hey, we’re making progress! We’re right where we should be, in the ‘chaos’ stage!” We met again, prayed together, committed to one another and went forward.

Thus, an important second lesson was that seeming chaos can be a way to real community. It was an insight that we carried over into our broader work with parishioners. It brought hope (and humor!) to what might have been despair. It also made us add retreats, potlucks and other social activities to our schedule of regular AALM business meetings so we could get to know one another more deeply beyond our tasks.

We also learned a third lesson from this experience—the importance of drawing upon

the expertise of people outside the parish who are experienced in diversity training, conflict resolution and the like.

As our process began, we frequently reviewed our initiatives with an interracial couple from New Jersey who had long worked in these fields. Later on, an experienced diversity trainer, Barry Cross, curious to learn about a faith-based approach to racial healing, actually joined the AALM and worked closely with us.

### ENGAGING THE PARISH

After careful preparation during the spring and summer of 1997, we kicked off the racial healing process in the broader St. Vincent community. Our priests gave homilies on racial justice and reconciliation at each Mass on a chosen Sunday. After the homilies, interracial teams of AALM members shared with the assembly their own experience of racism.

Our fourth lesson derived from these latter talks. The Black team members, whom most people in the assembly knew at least by sight, described the reality of racism and its painful, limiting impact on their lives. The White speakers, rather than presenting themselves as great fighters for racial justice, admitted their own racial prejudices, how bias was ingrained in them at an early age and how the stereotyping “tapes” still play in their heads. They also shared what was motivating them to move beyond guilt, to overcome their own racism, and to join the struggle for justice and healing.

### PERSONALIZING THE MESSAGE

This personalizing of our message had great impact on parishioners. After hearing the Black speakers, it was hard for anyone to pretend that racism no longer exists or that Christians have no obligation to fight it. The White speakers’ humility and admission of their own racism made it possible for many White listeners to say, “I don’t have to pretend that I’m free of

prejudice; maybe I can bring my prejudice out into the light and be part of a movement to eliminate racism.”

As worshipers left church that day, AALM members greeted them warmly at each door and politely handed them two of the best short articles we could find on race relations: “The Black Tax” and “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.” We also set up a permanent literature table in the church foyer which we supplied continuously with copies of articles and other information pertinent to racial justice and healing.

A few weeks later, we circulated an extensive questionnaire to every parishioner.

The thirty-plus questions probed the following:

- (1) What do you think we are currently doing pretty well in the parish to create racial healing?
- (2) What more can we do to deepen racial healing?

Two sociologists (members of St. Vincent’s) analyzed the returned questionnaires and reported the results to the whole parish.

Our fifth lesson, then, highlights our relationship with the parish membership. We asked their opinion about the process and drew them into it, rather than acting as though we had all the answers. We tried to approach the other parishioners with love, not judging them or making them feel guilty. At the same time, we sought to educate and challenge them with the best contemporary material we could find on the reality of racism and how to overcome it.

Answers to the questionnaire brought out parishioners’ strong interest in being part of small groups in which they could feel safe enough to discuss honestly the issue of racism and what to do about it. The AALM responded by agreeing to organize such small groups. One AALM member, drawing upon the group’s ideas, reading widely and consulting with outside experts, worked all summer to develop a 122-page Guidebook for Small Faith Groups on racial healing. This outlined a process for eight sessions to probe racism at deeper and deeper levels. It also was filled with resources and readings, group process suggestions, and ideas for group Scripture study and prayer.

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AALM also organized a team to train small group facilitators, realizing that the groups could bog down if they were left entirely on their own.

### **AMAZING RESULTS IN SMALL GROUPS**

The results were little short of amazing. Thirty small groups formed with 128 parishioners participating. As the groups got going, ripples spread out to others as the 128 shared the new understandings that came from small group discussions and exercises.

Perhaps the greatest learning was on the part of White participants who, often for the first time, grasped that American racism has conveyed to them unearned “White privilege.” White parishioner Carroll Clay testified that “racism had seemed nebulous to me before, but the process gave me a much more concrete understanding, especially about ‘white privilege’ and how it impacts everything.” Her husband Joe said that he learned for the first time about “systemic racism” and how it benefits White people. During the process, the Clays moved from their predominantly White suburban community to a thoroughly integrated city neighborhood.

Lesson six, then, was the importance of creating well-organized and skillfully facilitated “safe spaces” where parishioners could delve deeper into racial healing.

An event that helped our process along was the January 6, 1998 publication of a forceful pastoral letter, “Healing Racism Through Faith and Truth,” by our bishop, Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua. In it, he named racism a sin and a contagious moral disease that can and must be eradicated. He called upon all Catholics to “renew our efforts to end the evil of racism.” This provided a fitting prelude to the next stage of our racial healing process—making a long-term commitment.

### **REVISING THE TIMELINE**

The “timeline” in AALM’s initial proposal had outlined a two-year process plus some follow-up. Church members are accustomed to such time-limited “programs,” after which we move on to something else. As we confronted the demon of racism, however, we came to see that no “program” would be sufficient to cast it out.

On a Sunday in the spring of 1998, our

pastor, Fr. Aidan Rooney, c.m., announced from the pulpit that addressing racism is a long-term process. In fact, he said, it is part of our very identity as Christians.

Lesson seven, then, was the need to make an open-ended commitment to uproot racism, a sin so deep in American society that no short “program” could expect to bring justice and healing.

The St. Vincent racial healing process has sparked many other initiatives. Our priests mention racism in some way in nearly every homily. Our liturgy is more inclusive of the cadences of spirituals and gospel music. AALM teams have taken educational materials on the subject to our children’s Sunday classes. AALM has a permanent column in the parish bulletin called, “What Can I Do for Racial Healing?” Plans are afoot to add more multicultural “visuals” (art, banners, statuary, etc.) inside the church, so that people of color at worship will see more than white faces staring down at them from windows, niches and walls. We are about to embark on a six million dollar campaign to restore our ancient parish hall to make it useful for both the parish and the neighborhood.

In addition, a St. Vincent’s group collaborated with a local Jewish synagogue and traveled to Mississippi to help rebuild Black churches that had been burned to the ground by arsonists. A very effective workshop called “White People Working on Racism” has been held several times. Letters have been written to protest racial disparities in the city’s criminal justice system.

An AALM member has initiated a long-term “apostolate of listening” to reach out to Black Catholics hurt by the tragic events surrounding St. Catherine of Siena Church (described above). An interracial book club, theater group and movie club are building deeper personal relationships across racial lines. Parishioners viewed “The Color of Fear,” a challenging film on race relations, followed by a workshop (again with AALM-trained facilitators) to learn from it. Also, a great deal of outreach has been made to other churches, both Protestant and Catholic, who have expressed interest in starting their own racial healing process.

What are some of the other challenges

and insights that have come to us through this work? One is that racism in the post-civil-rights-movement era has taken a more cunning form. It is still persistent and poisonous, but its demonic power has metamorphosed into more subtle shapes than the time when signs proclaiming “Colored Drinking Fountain” abounded. This makes its elimination more difficult, though no less urgent. It underlines the importance of providing parishioners with well-written information and verbal encouragement to recognize and combat the new forms racism has taken.

### **CONSEQUENCES**

We know we are nowhere near the end of our racial healing process. At least one parishioner has gone to another parish because of objections to the process. In spite of all that we have done, some of our White parishioners are still blissfully unaware of (or try to overlook) today’s racism and the maddening frustrations people of color still face. Others, used to time-limited programs, keep asking, “When will this be over?”

At an even deeper level, some parishioners, whom we all regard as good people, just don’t get it. “I’m not prejudiced,” they say. “I wasn’t around during slavery. I’m not responsible for racism. I don’t see any need to get involved.” We are still perplexed about how to reach these good people. How can we help them become aware of their prejudices? How can we help them see that it is not enough to be just a “good person,” a non-racist. You must be actively anti-racist if racism ever is to be overcome.

Some of our White parishioners have recognized their prejudices and their unearned “white privilege,” but this recognition has made them feel guilty and immobilized. They have not yet developed a new and positive anti-racist self-image in which unjust White privilege and power is renounced and built-in privilege and power is used to make them allies of people of color in their struggle for equality. It’s a great journey, but we have a long way to go.

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