

# POVERTY and RACISM

*Overlapping Threats  
to the Common Good*

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Catholic  
Charities  
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A Catholic Charities USA Poverty in America Issue Brief



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Alexandria, Virginia 22314  
(703) 549-1390 • [www.catholiccharitiesusa.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org)

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## Foreword

We are pleased to present this document to you. It grew out of our 2006 policy paper: *Poverty in America: A Threat to the Common Good*. In that document we called for policy changes to reduce by half the number of Americans living in poverty by 2020. Catholic Charities USA and Catholic Charities agencies across the country are aware that we cannot responsibly address the issue of poverty without addressing the impact of race. In our *Vision 2000* statement, we recognized the connection and interplay between these issues when we stated that Catholic Charities USA needs to be “a leader in eradicating racism which permeates our society and its structures.”

Never has the urgency to address the issues of poverty and racism been so visible and paramount than during and after Hurricane Katrina. As a nation we were shocked, appalled, and embarrassed as we watched along with others from around the world the life and death consequences of being poor in America. What Americans and the world witnessed, however, was not a surprise to Catholic Charities USA and its member agencies. Everyday we observe poverty and racism as we serve a disproportionate number of people of color who are poor. When the tragedy in the Gulf Coast occurred, we were hopeful that finally America would be moved to action – to develop solutions that would result in our nation finally addressing poverty and racism to ensure that never again in our history would we experience the tragedy and suffering that took place in the Gulf Coast.

But as fast as the winds of Katrina blew in and the flood waters rose, the will of the people and the political will in Washington, D.C. receded. Two years later, the issue of poverty and racism remains unchanged. Therefore, it now requires our collective attention. This document is being presented to assist us in advancing this long overdue conversation. In order to adequately and seriously address poverty in this country, we must have a candid conversation and subsequent action that changes the impact that race has on poverty. This is not an easy conversation, one that many of us might like to avoid. The document itself may evoke a range of emotions in each of us that may cause us to be very uncomfortable. Whether it is anger, sadness, guilt, or denial, this document will touch us each in a very personal way.

This document helps us begin a process for change by first educating us, then causing us to reflect on our own personal experiences, and finally moving us to recommit ourselves to addressing the issue of racism and poverty in our lifetime. For some, the discomfort may cause inaction or polarization. We must not let that happen because for all of us this is a call to action. We ask each of you to join us in cutting poverty in half and in making our country whole.

# Poverty and Racism: Overlapping Threats to the Common Good

*A Catholic Charities USA Poverty in America Issue Brief*

As the new millennium approaches, there remains another great challenge facing this community . . . [and] the whole country: to put an end to every form of racism, a plague which [is] one of the most persistent and destructive evils of the nation.

—Pope John Paul II <sup>1</sup>

## **Introduction**

Poverty and racism continue to undermine our nation's most basic promise of liberty and justice for all. Even as the 40th anniversary of his assassination approaches, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s aspiration for America, "a dream of a land where men [and women] of all races, of all nationalities, and all creeds can live together as brothers [and sisters]" remains "a dream as yet unfulfilled."<sup>2</sup> During his final pastoral visit to the United States, the late Pope John Paul II issued a clarion call for Catholics and all people of good will to confront the tragic and enduring social evils of racial injustice and inequality.

Every day in this nation, Catholic Charities agencies serve individuals and families who struggle with the combined ills of racism and poverty. Our agencies provide health care and child welfare services, assistance to the elderly, shelter for the homeless, food for the hungry, and counseling for those in need of comfort. We see the faces of the poor across America. Our daily work makes us realize that the issues of race and poverty are deeply connected and often inseparable.

This realization was reinforced in our 2006 policy paper titled, *Poverty in America: A Threat to the Common Good*. In that document, we called for public policy proposals, creative initiatives, and collective changes of heart that would cut poverty in half by 2020. We undertook this initiative out of the conviction that poverty is a scandalous affront to the Christian conscience and endangers the social peace and future prosperity of this nation.

It is our strong belief that any strategy to reduce poverty in America must also confront the deep connection between racism and poverty. As we stated in 2006, we are convinced that poverty and racism "are so intertwined that it is impossible to fully separate them. Racism, in both its individual and institutional forms, is a cause of poverty and at the same time an additional barrier for people of color seeking to escape poverty." We are convinced that without

a conscious and proactive struggle against racism, our efforts to reduce the plague of poverty will be in vain. Any effective campaign to reduce poverty must also confront the “unresolved racism” which still permeates our national life.<sup>3</sup> In order to uproot the scandal of poverty, we must also be agents of racial justice.

This paper, then, builds upon and expands our 2006 document by deepening our understanding of how racism exacerbates the scourge of poverty. Our purpose is threefold:

- To educate readers about the reality and history of racial injustice in our nation, the moral reasoning and convictions that ground our concern about this social evil, and the public policies we advocate for its alleviation.
- To advance awareness and more adequate public discourse about the enduring reality of racism in the political arena and in the media.
- To invite others, both in the Catholic community and in the broader society, to join with us in a concerted effort to be more effective allies in the ongoing struggle against every manifestation of racial injustice and bias.

We do not intend to provide an in-depth analysis of the complex reality that is racism in the United States. We will concentrate our attention on racism’s economic effects and how it intersects with the evil of poverty.

## The Challenge of the Changing Face of America

Any concern with racial justice today must take into account the changing demographics of American society and the seismic shift in the composition of our population. We are becoming more racially and culturally diverse than ever before. At least one out of three Americans is now “Latino or nonwhite.”<sup>4</sup> Many of our nation’s urban centers are now so-called “majority-minority,” meaning not only that people of color are the majority of the population, but also that no single racial or ethnic group constitutes a numerical majority. Because of immigration patterns and differing birthrates among the various racial groups, it appears likely that by the middle of this century, whites will no longer be the majority race in the United States. Indeed, it is probable that our country will have no single racial majority group.<sup>5</sup>

If we are going to create a more just America for the new majority of our citizens, we must address some of the current challenges facing our nation. While the majority of poor people in our country currently are white, a disproportionate number of poor people are persons of color. Consider the following facts cited in our 2006 statement:

- The highest rates of poverty are among children, especially children of color. The poverty rate for white children is 10 percent, while it is 28 percent for Latino children, 27 percent for Native-American children, and 33 percent for African-American children.<sup>6</sup>
- African Americans, Latino Americans, and Native Americans are about three times as likely to live in poverty as are whites. While the poverty rate for non-Hispanic whites is 8 percent, the rate for African Americans is 24.1 percent, for Hispanics, 21.8 percent, and for Native Americans, 23.2 percent.<sup>7</sup>
- The most extreme poverty in the United States is concentrated in specific geographical areas such as the urban cores of major cities and Native American reservations. These areas of concentrated poverty are the result of decades of policies that confined the impoverished to these economically isolated areas.
- Finally, we also noted the stark racial disparity in the distribution of wealth in the United States. White families not only have on average 10 times the net worth of families of color, but also between 1998 and 2001, their wealth grew by 20 percent, while the net worth of African American households actually declined during that same period.<sup>8</sup>

Thus the major demographic shifts of the present and near future force us to confront the unfinished business of our nation’s struggles for racial justice and inclusion. As one authoritative study notes, “The color question is pervasive in our lives, and it is an explicit tension or at least subtext in countless policy debates.”<sup>9</sup> The ghosts of our legacy of racial inequality



continue to haunt us. Incidents of racial violence and protests against alleged brutalities; the racial inequities in the nation's criminal justice system; the racial disparities present in health care delivery and access; the continuing controversies over affirmative action; the flood of complaints to government agencies over racial discrimination in employment and promotion; the popularity of "English only" initiatives; the presence of "gated communities" in our residential neighborhoods; the acrimonious debates over immigration policy; and the hate crimes perpetrated against those deemed different provide ample evidence that managing our demographic transition and forging a new American identity will not be easy. We undertake this task burdened by a history of racial injustice, social intolerance, and cultural privilege.

## Racism: A Challenge to Catholic Christian Faith

As members of Catholic Charities USA, we approach social issues from a faith perspective grounded in a concern for human dignity and full human flourishing. We draw inspiration from the heritage of our church's social teaching. As the American Catholic bishops declared in 1958, "The heart of the race question is moral and religious."<sup>10</sup> For us, the existence of racial intolerance, discrimination, and privilege is not only a social injustice; we believe that racism is absolutely irreconcilable with Christian faith and belief.

As Catholic Christians, we espouse certain fundamental beliefs about God, the human family, and social justice that are directly relevant to the evil of racism.

*1) We believe in one Creator God and the common origin of humankind.* Because human beings have a common Creator, the human race has an essential unity that is prior to any distinctions of race, nationality, or ethnicity. All humanity is created in the image and likeness of God (cf. Genesis 1:26). We further believe that God has endowed all men and women with an equal and inviolable dignity, value, and worth. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI, "Before God, all men and women have the same dignity, whatever their nation, culture, or religion."<sup>11</sup> Our response to this intrinsic human dignity is to recognize, promote, and defend it from all forms of attack and to create the social conditions in which all human persons may flourish.

This fundamental conviction of our faith has received forceful rearticulation from the pastors of our church. Reiterating the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, the Pope proclaimed, "On the basis of our shared human dignity the Catholic Church 'condemns as foreign to the mind of Christ any kind of discrimination whatsoever between people, or harassment of them, done by reason of race or color, class or religion.'"<sup>12</sup>

Racism fractures the unity of the human family, violates the human rights of individuals and groups, mocks the God-given equal dignity of human beings, and thus is absolutely incompatible with authentic faith in God.

*2) We believe that the diversity of the human family is a divine blessing and mirrors the inner life of God.* In the story of Pentecost, we read how the various peoples of the earth were able to hear God's word proclaimed "each in their own language" (Acts 2:11). The Holy Spirit's descent upon the church did not cancel or annul differences of race, language, or culture. Instead the Spirit's presence caused these differences not to be an obstacle to the unity of the human family. The Spirit enriches humanity and the church with a variety of gifts.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, because the church is "catholic"—that is, inclusive and universal—the diversity of peoples, languages, cultures, and colors among us must not only be tolerated, but also cherished and celebrated.

Furthermore, the diversity of the human community, we believe, reflects the differentiation present in the interior life of the Triune God. Christians believe in a Trinitarian God, a community of persons who exist in a communion of life and love. In God, the Divine Persons

relate to one another in neither domination nor subordination.<sup>14</sup> In God, there is distinction without separation, unity without uniformity, difference without division. Since we are created in the image of this God, God's own life becomes the model for human social life.<sup>15</sup> The variety of languages, cultures, and colors in the human family, then, is a mirror of the Trinitarian God whose essence is a loving embrace of difference.

*3) We believe in the solidarity of the human family, which leads to the conviction that we are responsible for each other's welfare.*<sup>16</sup> Just as the Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity are united in love, so the human family is bound together by that social form of charity that is called *solidarity*.<sup>17</sup> This solidarity moves us to have a concern for those who are different from us and to see them as full sharers in our humanity – indeed, as neighbors and friends. As Pope John Paul II taught, “Solidarity helps us to see the ‘other’ – whether a person, people, or nation – not just as some kind of instrument . . . but as our ‘neighbor,’ a ‘helper’ (cf. Gn. 2:18-20), to be made a sharer on a par with ourselves in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God.”<sup>18</sup>

*4) Finally, we believe that the poor and the marginalized have a privileged claim upon the consciences of believers and the public concern of the state.* Often called a “preferential option or concern for the poor,” Pope John Paul described this as “a call to have a special openness with the small and the weak, those that suffer and weep, those that are humiliated and left on the margin of society, so as to help them win their dignity as human persons and children of God.”<sup>19</sup> As the U.S. bishops observed in their pastoral letter, *Economic Justice for All*, though the majority of the poor in our nation are white, “the rates of poverty are highest among those who have borne the brunt of racial prejudice and discrimination.”<sup>20</sup> Because racism both exacerbates the poverty of those who are poor and results in economic disadvantage even for those who are not, a faith-inspired preferential concern for the poor and socially vulnerable demands a proactive struggle against the social evil of racism.

The heart of our conviction is well-expressed by the U.S. Bishops when they proclaim, “Racism is not just one sin among many; it is a radical evil which divides the human family.”<sup>21</sup>

Honesty, however, compels us to acknowledge that the Catholic community in the United States has not always lived up to the call of our faith. While there have always been believers who have acted heroically out of our faith's convictions, too often many others have given “counter-witness and scandal” in the struggle for racial justice and equality.<sup>22</sup> History shows that the Catholic Church has not been immune from the racial virus that afflicts American culture. As the U.S. Bishops acknowledged in 1992:

As Church, we often have been unconscious and insensitive to the mistreatment of our Native American brothers and sisters and have at times reflected the racism of the dominant culture of which we have been a part.<sup>23</sup>

The church's tragic complicity in racism is further evidenced in its justification of slavery and ownership of slaves; the refusal to admit persons of color to seminaries, convents, and religious life; its silence concerning legal segregation; and the hostility, violence, and white flight which greeted blacks who moved into Catholic urban ethnic neighborhoods (an historical precursor of many problems facing our cities today).<sup>24</sup>

Acknowledging this sad legacy of racial complicity is painful. Yet, we cannot ask the wider society to do what we are unwilling to do ourselves. Our faith leaders teach, “History can be healing if we will face up to its lessons.”<sup>25</sup> May this history serve as an impetus for renewed determination to remedy perpetrated harms and to not repeat our failures – tasks we undertake with the help of God.

## What is Racism?

Part of what makes racism such a difficult issue to address in our nation's public discourse is that most Americans lack an adequate understanding of how "persistent and destructive" this evil continues to be in contemporary society. Many believe that racism is a matter of the past, conveyed on the grainy images of black and white films. No one disputes that acts of blatant insensitivity still stain our social fabric. Most grant that occasional acts of callous bigotry still occur. But Americans tend to believe that these are isolated incidents and tragic exceptions to the climate of racial decency which now prevails among the majority of Americans in general, and white Americans in particular. At best, this thinking is naive. At worst, it is a delusion and an evasion of reality.

We do not dispute that much has changed in race relations since the abolition of slavery and the legal exclusion of persons of color, but we believe that in America we have too often confused the symptoms for the disease and focused on appearances rather than substance. We are convinced that what has happened all too often has been only a covering over, and not a fundamental change in, the racial dynamics of our society.<sup>26</sup>

Racism has never been solely or principally about insults, slurs, or exclusion, as demeaning and harmful as these are. These are but the symptoms of a deeper malady.

We believe that the United States, despite the undeniable changes in racism's manifestations, still remains a "racialized society," that is, "a society wherein race matters profoundly for differences in life experiences, life opportunities, and social relationships." We are a nation "that allocates differential economic, political, social, and even psychological rewards to groups along racial lines; lines that are socially constructed."<sup>27</sup> At its core, racism is a system of racially conferred – and denied – privilege, advantage, benefits, and status. This inequality of status and benefit endures today. Thus, "racism today remains what it has always been: a defense of racial privilege."<sup>28</sup>

Racism entails more than conscious ill-will, more than deliberate acts of avoidance, exclusion, malice, and violence perpetrated by individuals. We acknowledge that members of any racial group can – and, in fact, do – act unjustly toward those they consider racially "different." But such individual acts cannot alter the fact that in the United States, one racial group is socially advantaged, and the others endure social stigma. Racism describes the reality of unearned advantage, conferred dominance, and invisible privilege enjoyed by white Americans, to the detriment, burden, and disadvantage of people of color. This network of racially conferred advantages and benefits has been termed "white privilege."<sup>29</sup>

“White privilege” refers to the reality that in U.S. society “there are opportunities which are afforded whites that people of color simply do not share.”<sup>30</sup> These advantages range from greater ease in hailing a taxi and moving into whatever neighborhood they can afford, to easier access to positions of social influence and political power, to the presumption that their race will not work against them when seeking employment and in other social situations. Being racially advantaged might be unwanted or undesired by individual white Americans. In fact, some white Americans are distressed when they become aware of the reality of white privilege. Regardless of an individual’s desires, an “invisible package of unearned assets” is enjoyed by white people because of the racial consciousness which is subtly pervasive in our social customs and institutions.<sup>31</sup>

“White privilege” may be a new and even troubling concept for many in our nation and church. Most of us are trained to see how racism disadvantages or burdens people of color. We are not so accustomed to see how racism results in unfair advantages or benefits for the dominant racial group. “White privilege” shifts the focus from how people of color are harmed by racism to how white Americans derive advantages because of it. White privilege is the flip-side and inescapable corollary of racial injustice. Racial injustice comes about to preserve and protect white privilege.

“White privilege” results when pervasive beliefs about the inadequacies of people of color become expressed by or entrenched in our society’s institutional policies, social customs, cultural media, and political processes. Thus, there arises a mutually reinforcing relationship between personal prejudicial beliefs and common social practices:

People who assume, consciously or unconsciously, that white people are superior create and sustain institutions that privilege people like themselves and habitually ignore the contributions of other peoples and cultures. This “white privilege” often goes undetected because it has become internalized and integrated as part of one’s outlook on the world by custom, habit, and tradition. It can be seen in most of our institutions: judicial and political systems, social clubs, associations, hospitals, universities, labor unions, small and large business, major corporations, the professions, sports teams, and the arts.<sup>32</sup>

This insight leads to two further observations. First, racial privilege operates in ways that are often outside of conscious awareness. Second, racial privilege is not “natural”; it is a human creation.

For the most part, white Americans do not think of themselves as “white” or as belonging to a “white culture.” When asked what their racial or cultural identity is, many whites state an ethnic background (e.g., a hybrid of German/Irish) but then relate that this ethnic background is not a significant part of their personal identity. Most whites describe themselves as “American” – which is significant because if “American” is their specific cultural identity, what does that make Americans of color? Very few spontaneously describe themselves as “white.”<sup>33</sup> As Joe Feagin and Hernan Vera conclude, “Apparently, for most whites, being white means rarely having to think about it.”<sup>34</sup> To put this another way, most whites do not see themselves as racialized, as having a racial identity or status.

This means that white Americans are often oblivious to white privilege and how deeply embedded racial advantage is in our nation unless those who are “other” challenge their understanding of reality.<sup>35</sup>

Thus many white Americans – and Americans of color as well – are unaware of how deeply affected they are by their racial framing and cultural conditioning. We are conditioned to not see white privilege; we are socialized to see white advantage and benefit as “normal” and just the way things are.

Racism, then, is much more complex than the typical understanding acknowledges. It is far more than deliberate acts of exclusion, bias, and bigotry. Racism is a way of understanding and interpreting skin color differences so that white Americans enjoy a privileged social status with access to advantages and benefits to the detriment, disadvantage, and burden of persons of color. Racism, in all of its forms and permutations, is at its core a defense of racially-based social privilege.

## The Reality of Economic Privilege: The Connection Between Racism and Poverty

The privileged status of whiteness did not “just happen.” It has been deliberately constructed over a long period of time. White privilege is the result of social policies, institutions, and procedures that deliberately created a system that advanced the welfare of white Americans and impeded the opportunities of persons of color.<sup>36</sup>

Among the most important effects and manifestations of white privilege are the economic advantages that have been conferred upon white Americans by public policy and political power throughout our history. Racism inevitably causes economic disadvantages and burdens for groups of color. Here are several key events and movements that exemplify the link between race and poverty, events that both burdened people of color seeking to escape poverty and eased the way for white Americans to advance their economic fortunes.

- *The institution of slavery.* Slavery means exploited labor; the labor of enslaved Africans was essential for creating wealth for others from which they often derived no benefit. Slavery resulted in the creation of wealth not only for the white slave-holding elite, but for all who benefited from and participated in a “slavery-centered” economy (e.g., merchants, bankers, fishermen, shipbuilders, traders, auctioneers, bounty hunters, and immigrant farmers).<sup>37</sup>
- *The Indian Removal Act of 1830.* By this act of Congress, Native Americans were forcibly removed from their lands and resettled in territory that was of no interest to whites. Their property was then made available for white settlers. This stolen land became the basis for white economic enrichment which could be passed on as an inheritance to future generations. This economic disenfranchisement also led to the impoverishment of future generations of Native Americans.<sup>38</sup>
- *Supreme Court Decision of Plessy v. Ferguson (1896).* This decision enshrined the realities of racial segregation, second-class citizenship, and “separate but equal” facilities in our national life. Among the many pernicious effects of this decision was the creation of inferior educational opportunities for African Americans. They and other communities of color endured severely restricted access to quality education. Segregated schools were poorly funded in comparison to their white counterparts. This created a deficit of educational attainment – the effects of which are still with us – which translated into economic disadvantage in the labor market, including participation in higher paying and socially prestigious professions.<sup>39</sup>
- *The exclusion of Asian Indians from eligibility for U.S. citizenship.* In 1923, the U.S. Supreme Court (*U.S. v. Bhagat Singh Thind*) ruled that while Asian Indians were indeed “Caucasians” by race, they could not be considered “white.” The result was that many Asian

Indians were stripped of their naturalized citizenship. This meant that they were unable to legally own property; many had their assets taken from them and given to whites.<sup>40</sup>

- *The exclusion of domestics and agricultural workers from the Social Security Act of 1935.* At the height of the Depression, this law created a new public policy that established a basic level of economic security for many of the country's workers. However, by excluding domestics and agricultural workers, this act effectively denied Social Security pensions and benefits to 75 percent of black workers.<sup>41</sup>
- *The provisions of the Wagner Act (1935), which allowed unions to exclude African Americans from union membership.* This legislation granted legal protections and recognitions to labor unions not previously enjoyed and gave many working class whites access to higher wages and benefits. However, because the act also allowed unions to exclude blacks from union membership and its benefits, it legally protected white laborers from competition in the job market, creating economic opportunities reserved for whites, and further maintaining the existence of a lower paid, exploited labor pool.
- *The failure of the Federal Housing Administration (1940s and 1950s) to grant loans to even minimally integrated neighborhoods.* This agency provided low-cost government-guaranteed loans to working class families, enabling mass home ownership and the accumulation of wealth that could be passed on to children. Ninety-eight percent of these loans were given to whites; blacks were granted less than two percent. The refusal to grant loans to integrated neighborhoods was a practice known as "redlining."

Many more historical examples can be cited. These suffice in demonstrating how white privilege was deliberately created and often state-sanctioned. It also resulted in "unjust impoverishment" for groups of color and "unjust enrichment" for white Americans. "Unjust enrichment and unjust impoverishment are critical concepts for understanding [our nation's] past and present" economic realities and the link between racism and poverty.<sup>42</sup>

The pernicious effects of this deliberate and state-sanctioned "unjust impoverishment" endure to this day. This creates a serious obligation to repair the economic injuries and material deprivation that has been inflicted upon communities of color. Therefore, we support conscious efforts to correct past injustices with proactive deeds.

The responsibility to repair the harm or injury done to another is long recognized in Catholic moral theology. Traditional moral teaching speaks of the duty of restitution, based on the principle that "when injustice is done it must be repaired."<sup>43</sup> The Holy See recently has applied this teaching to the specific issue of racial grievances and the question of reparations. This teaching recognizes that various forms of racial reparation are possible, including monetary compensation, formal apologies and statements of regret, and symbolic gestures (such as monuments and memorials to the victims of an injustice).<sup>44</sup> As an organization, Catholic Charities USA is not yet prepared to endorse either a particular mode of reparation or any concrete proposal that is under current discussion. Instead, we call for a responsible national study and resolution of this complex question that respects the principle that "social harm calls for social relief."<sup>45</sup>



## The Legacy of the Past in the Present: The Contemporary Reality of Racial Disparity

The dynamics of the past are directly relevant to understanding the disproportionate impact of poverty upon groups of color today. We live with the legacy of past decisions and social policies that have created a transgenerational burden of severely circumscribed economic opportunity.

*Wealth Disparity.* The past gives us the context for understanding the severe wealth disparity between racial groups, which we noted at the beginning of this paper. For most Americans, their greatest asset is their home. Home ownership provides one of the chief means of wealth generation; it provides the means for accessing opportunities such as collateral for buying a business or obtaining loans for higher education, it is one of the principal sources of financial stability in case of an economic emergency; and it is a means by which wealth is accumulated and passed on to one's heirs.

Thus the historic exclusion of African Americans and other groups from the benefits of home ownership creates an economic deficit and reduced access to social mobility that persists even today. Whites as a social group have the present advantage of decades of accumulated wealth and the opportunities it provides.

*Residential Segregation and the Concentration of Poverty.* The importance of housing for financial stability makes all the more troubling the current residential segregation of our country. Perhaps the most stubborn and persistent manifestation of racism is the highly segregated housing patterns found in the United States. An authoritative recent study of race relations in our nation observes, "Housing is probably one of those areas in which the persistence of White prejudice and discrimination is still most alive."<sup>46</sup> Stable racially integrated neighborhoods are rare in our country. Many of our metropolitan areas are even considered "hypersegregated." The term, "spatial racism," has been coined to describe this severe residential segregation.<sup>47</sup>

The result is that whites and people of color are geographically separated, and increasingly isolated, from one another: "Spatial racism creates a visible chasm between the rich and the poor, and between whites and people of color."<sup>48</sup> Because cities are increasingly viewed as black or brown enclaves, discussions of urban life have taken on racial overtones.

Given the importance of residence for determining one's access to quality education, health care, employment opportunities, and informal social networking, it comes as little surprise that residential segregation greatly contributes to the disparities between blacks and whites in educational achievement, quality of health care, and acquisition of wealth.<sup>49</sup> "The more segregated or isolated a neighborhood, the less likely it is that the residents will have easy

access to information concerning schools, apprenticeship programs, the labor market, financial markets, and so on.”<sup>50</sup>

*Employment Discrimination.* News accounts of alleged racial discrimination in the nation’s workplaces are still quite common. Despite measurable progress during the last 20 years, people of color still must negotiate subtle obstacles and overcome covert barriers in their pursuit of employment and/or promotion. Studies document that although racial minorities now experience greater ease in being hired for entry-level positions than in the past, they are often stymied when it comes to being promoted to positions of significant influence and responsibility.<sup>51</sup> According to the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, even after three decades of affirmative action, a severe racial disparity continues to exist in the top ranks of corporate leadership. For example, white males – a minority of the nation’s workforce – hold more than 90 percent of corporate senior management positions.<sup>52</sup> This commission further notes that the “fears and prejudices” of white middle managers are most responsible for this continued racial disparity.<sup>53</sup>

*Controversies over Immigration.* For over 100 years, our agencies have worked with immigrants who come to our nation in search of economic opportunity. Our daily work gives us first hand experience of how racism and poverty impact many members of the new immigrant groups among us. Children in immigrant families suffer higher poverty rates, endure more housing and food problems, and receive public benefits at lower rates than children in native families.<sup>54</sup> We are also concerned that anxieties about border security focus primarily on the border shared with Mexico, and not the one with Canada. This leads us to suspect that such discussions have a racial subtext, fueled by an anxiety over the number of darker-skinned immigrants in our country.

*The Scandal of Hurricane Katrina.* Katrina was not just an act of nature. It was also a social phenomenon that exposed the harsh reality of race-based poverty that exists in the United States. Even after two years, the images of misery displayed on our televisions – the abandoned who were overwhelmingly black and destitute – continue to haunt us. Katrina revealed, as no other event in recent history, the tragic confluence of racism and poverty that exists in our nation’s cities – a poverty and racism exacerbated by decades of social callousness and public neglect.<sup>55</sup>

The evidence of the past and present confirms our fundamental insight: the elimination of poverty and economic deprivation is impossible without a proactive struggle against racial injustice and white privilege. These social evils, while distinct, are inseparably intertwined.

## **A Call to Action: Confronting Racism to Eliminate the Threat of Poverty**

Racism is not natural. White privilege does not just happen. It is important to stress the human agency behind white privilege for two reasons. First, human agency makes white privilege an ethical reality for which there is moral responsibility and accountability. Second, because human agents created and maintain racial injustice, human agency can also challenge, modify, and dismantle it. This is the basis for our call to action.

We reaffirm the policy proposals we advocated in our prior 2006 statement for the elimination of poverty. These centered on creating more livable wage jobs, raising the wages of existing low-paid jobs, and investing our common wealth in social welfare policies for low-income families and individuals. Here we focus on those additional measures needed to address the poverty which is racially caused or aggravated.

### **Public Policy Proposals**

#### *A Renewed Commitment to Racial Equality as a National Goal and Priority*

Martin Luther King, Jr., lamented that during his life most white Americans were not sincerely committed to genuine equality but to mere “improvement.” He observed a fundamental ambivalence whereby the white majority wants to condemn blatant acts of injustice, and yet preserve their position of social dominance. He concluded that the majority of the dominant culture is suspended between two opposing attitudes: “They are uneasy with injustice, but unwilling yet to pay a significant price to eradicate it.”<sup>56</sup> King’s insights resonate with our own conviction that what is hailed as “racial progress” is too often a covering over and not a fundamental change in race relations.

Our reflection leads us to conclude that our national commitment to racial equality has been half-hearted, at best. Thus, we call for a new commitment to the project of genuine racial equality. We believe that the proposals we advocate below will contribute to this goal. Yet, until the reality of white privilege is forthrightly acknowledged and addressed, genuine racial equality will be unattainable. Therefore, we call upon scholars, activists, theologians, and pastors to help all Americans to deepen our understanding of white privilege and the ethical challenges it poses for a nation struggling to commit itself to genuine racial equality.

#### *Improved Fair Housing Laws*

As noted above, segregated housing remains one of the most stubborn and persistent manifestations of racism. Racially segregated neighborhoods too often suffer social abandonment, creating inferior housing stock that severely curtails economic advancement. Yet the cause of fair housing seems to have drifted off of the national radar and is no longer a pressing priority. We strongly advocate the stricter enforcement of fair housing laws and for more adequate funding of those agencies charged with administering, monitoring, and enforcing existing laws

against racial discrimination in obtaining the residence of one's choice. We advocate greater accountability and transparency in the mortgage industry and more effective oversight of lending agencies to ensure equal access to the funding necessary to obtain housing financing.

#### *Increased Federal Funding for Affordable Housing*

Given the historic exclusion of communities of color from the opportunities to accumulate financial assets, many find themselves at a disadvantage when seeking competitive rates for financing a home. We therefore advocate for increased federal support in building more affordable housing and expanding other opportunities for people of color to purchase their own homes. At the least, the government should provide opportunities for communities of color to enjoy the same benefits provided to white Americans during the 1940s and 1950s. Basic fairness demands that just as these groups were actively excluded from federal mortgage guarantees in the past, they now deserve to be intentionally included today.

#### *Stronger Laws to Punish Predatory Lenders*

Numerous studies detail how central city neighborhoods suffer from a dearth of financial and banking services compared to suburban communities. This void has been filled by institutions offering financial services to the poor, charging exorbitant interest rates for “pay day” loans and short-term rentals of consumer goods. This results in a spiral of debt that creates further economic disadvantage for low-income people. We therefore call for stronger laws to punish predatory lenders, cap the interest that can be charged for short-term loans, and require greater transparency of the conditions of such loans in a language that is accessible for those who might have limited education or English proficiency.

#### *Progressive Affirmative Action Policies in Education and Employment*

The active exclusion of groups of color from educational and employment opportunities in the past creates an obligation to alleviate the resulting inequities of the present. Moreover, we have noted that ample evidence exists that racial discrimination in education and employment has not disappeared. Despite the views of many in our nation, we believe that the need for affirmative action in employment and education is still urgent.

There is no single type of affirmative action program. “Affirmative action” is an umbrella term given to a variety of practices that seek to address and rectify the pervasive discrimination and social stigma suffered by people of color and women. Such practices include aggressive recruitment and targeted advertising campaigns; remedial education and job training programs; vigilant enforcement of nondiscrimination laws; and flexible hiring goals, recruitment targets, and promotion timetables.

Affirmative action thus has at least a twofold purpose: 1) to compensate for the enduring effects of our history of publicly sponsored racial exclusion and segregation; and 2) to minimize the occurrence of present and future discrimination, toward the goal of creating a just and inclusive society.<sup>57</sup> For these reasons, we support it as a means toward alleviating racially-based economic disadvantage.

#### *Quality Educational Opportunity for the Poor*

As we have noted, economic advancement is linked to educational opportunity. Yet, too often the quality of one's education is dependent upon where one has the fortune (or misfortune) of living. The poor state of public education in many of our nation's cities is a complex phenomenon with multiple contributing causes. Regardless, it is a scandal that children of color endure school environments and a lack of resources that would never be tolerated for

white children.<sup>58</sup> We call for more adequate measures that will equalize the funding of public education across metropolitan areas, so as to enhance quality public instruction for all those who will be entrusted with our nation's future.

*“Digital Inclusion” and Access to Technology*

The fact of the “digital divide,” that is, the gap in information technology access between racial groups and economic classes, is the subject of recent public discussion. What often goes unnoted, however, are the economic consequences of this “digital exclusion” in an information economy. Research suggests that “people with access to the Internet have better access to life opportunities such as living wage jobs.”<sup>59</sup> We therefore advocate increased measures that provide low-cost or free Internet access to impoverished communities of color.

*Comprehensive Immigration Reform*

Catholic Charities USA continues to advocate for just and comprehensive policies that address the needs of newcomers. We call on Congress to enact comprehensive immigration policies that not only promote the security of our nation, but also put undocumented workers and their families on a path to lawful permanent residence and citizenship, create greater legal avenues for necessary workers to enter the United States, promote the success of newcomers, and improve the economic prospects, health care access, and safe working conditions for all U.S. residents.

*Comprehensive Criminal Justice Reform*

Along with the increasing rate of poverty, the number of incarcerated Americans has risen significantly in recent decades. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, between 1995 and 2006, the number of incarcerated Americans in federal, state, and local facilities rose from 1.5 million to 2.2 million.<sup>60</sup> Just as a disproportionate number of persons of color live in poverty, there also is a severe racial disparity in the ranks of the incarcerated. Federal and state criminal justice reforms are urgently needed to address biases in sentencing practices. Further, each year more than 650,000 men and women re-enter communities across America from our nation's prisons. Too few of them are prepared for their new environments or receive adequate supportive services upon their release. This is a recipe for failure. We, therefore, advocate comprehensive support for newly released individuals so that they can make a better transition back into their communities and become economically productive citizens.

*Investments in the Nation's Social Safety Net*

People of color disproportionately rely on the social safety net of our country. Programs such as food stamps, Medicaid, and Medicare are essential to the survival of many low-income families. Catholic Charities USA continues to call upon the federal and state governments to strengthen and protect these vital programs. We further call for programmatic reforms to address barriers that keep eligible families from accessing these programs.

**The Commitment of Catholic Charities USA**

The above recommendations require a significant change in the public consensus over the causes of poverty and the understanding of racism. We commit ourselves to being agents to promote these needed new ways of thinking, understanding, and acting. Specifically, we commit ourselves to:

- Presenting the connection between poverty and racial injustice in our publications or public statements dealing with poverty;

- Incorporating a conscious and intentional advocacy for racial justice as a constitutive aspect of our self-understanding and mission;
- Deepening our understanding of the reality of white privilege and how it affects our agencies, policies, and relationships with employees and clients of color;
- Engaging in a serious examination of our own recruitment, employment, promotion, and vending practices to ensure that we are exemplary models of the anti-racism stance we advocate for others;
- Developing a plan of action for the changes needed to correct the deficiencies our internal examination of current practices reveals; and
- Cultivating a stance of proactive solidarity and strong partnerships with communities of color, both nationally and locally, as a step toward overcoming our blindness to racial privilege and becoming better advocates for racial justice in both our church and society.

### **The Call to Individuals of Good Will**

Few issues engage us so emotionally and viscerally as the issue of racism. A serious encounter and reflection on this reality engenders reactions of fear, defensiveness, guilt, denial, anger, sadness, discouragement, weariness, and even despair. We can also feel overwhelmed by the magnitude of the challenge, embarrassed by our ignorance and lack of understanding, and/or impatient with the slow and limited progress made thus far. Perhaps we even recoil at the prospect of having to reevaluate and change our fundamental understanding of what racism is and how we have been the perhaps unwitting beneficiaries of the injustices inflicted upon others.

Such emotions are real. Yet the challenge is to use them as catalysts for arriving at deeper and truer understandings of who we are and the society we live in. None of us is responsible for the misinformation we have been given about our history. Yet we are accountable for how we use this information once we become more and more aware of our true situation.

For white Americans especially, the challenge of accepting the reality of white privilege can be daunting. Some may honestly wonder, “Why should I give up a social status that benefits me?” We answer: “Because the privileges of some are obtained at the expense of others. Because our nation cannot endure in peace and prosperity as long as so many are excluded from its wealth and advantages. Because the American Dream is an aspiration for all, not the possession of only a few. Because the Prophets and the Gospels remind us that we are given to each other’s care, and the measure of our response to the least among us is the measure of our response to God.”

Others may become increasingly ill at ease and morally discomforted, especially as their privileged status becomes more and more undesired. Here, the call is to become aware of those many, largely-unknown white Americans who have been genuine allies with communities of color in the struggle for racial justice. Like the Quakers, the conductors of the Underground Railroad, and Saint Katherine Drexel (foundress of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and fierce advocate for African and Native American peoples), there have been – and still are – people of good will who have used their conferred position of racial privilege to challenge racial injustice and even subvert the system of privilege. The reality of one’s white privilege does not make him or her an evil individual; what a person does with that privilege is the acid-test of his or her personal morality.

## Conclusion

What motivates our concern about racism is our faith conviction that this is a “radical evil” which is not only absolutely incompatible with Christian faith and belief, but also a dire threat to our nation’s future. A new way of understanding what it means to be “American,” and who is included in that self-understanding, is urgently needed for both the integrity of our faith and our survival as a nation. Given the momentous shift occurring in our racial demographics, tolerating racial injustice and economic deprivation are realities we can no longer afford to indulge.

We offer to both our church and society the following affirmations and convictions:

- Poverty and racial injustice are deeply intertwined and demand a simultaneous engagement if effective progress is to be made against either.
- Poverty and racial injustice are moral scandals that betray our national ideals of “liberty and justice for all.”
- Poverty and racial injustice are the results of human agency. They need not exist. This means that social reality can be other than the way it is. “Social life is created by human beings, by human choices and decisions. This means that human beings can change things. And therein lies the hope.”<sup>61</sup>

We conclude with the final words of the U.S. Bishops’ pastoral letter on racism:

There must be no turning back along the road of justice, no sighing for bygone times of privilege, no nostalgia for simple solutions from another age. For we are children of the age to come, when the first shall be last and the last first, when blessed are they who serve Christ the Lord in all His brothers and sisters, especially those who are poor and suffer injustice.

## Appendix: An Explanation of Terms<sup>62</sup>

One of the challenges present in discussions about race and racism is that the terminology used to refer to the various racial and ethnic groups is fluid, evolving, contested, and rarely emotionally neutral. Among such terms are “white,” “people of color,” “nonwhite,” and “racial/ethnic minority.” For the sake of clarity and understanding, we provide the following explanations for how these terms are used in this document.

The term “white” refers to the dominant cultural group in our country. Originally, this group was primarily of Western European descent. It is important to note that “white” is a fluid category which has come to include over the years ethnic groups from other parts of the world. For example, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (1999) defined “white” as “a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.” The U.S. Census Bureau further explains that “white” encompasses those who wrote on their census forms entries such as “Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, near Easterner, Arab, or Polish.” “White,” then, for the purposes of this paper, does not refer to a “race,” but rather to a social group which has access to political, social, economic, or cultural advantages that people of color do not share.

The terms “people of color” and “nonwhites” are collective terms that refer to all other racial and ethnic groups in U.S. society. While these terms make reference to skin color, they much more refer to social groups which, for the most part, find themselves without the ease of access to political, social, economic, or cultural advantages enjoyed by those designated as whites.

It should be further noted that “race” is a troublesome term, as is the idea that human beings constitute or can be divided into discrete and racially distinct social groups. The U.S. Census Bureau’s understanding is important for our discussion in this document. It notes: “The categories represent a *social-political construct* designed for collecting data on race and ethnicity population groups in this country, and are not anthropologically or scientifically based.”<sup>63</sup> In other words, “race” is a term of limited *scientific* usefulness, at best. Yet the enduring *social significance* of physical and cultural differences among human groups gives rise to the moral concerns at the heart of this document.

Difficulties also surround the use of the terms “minority” and “minority group” when referring to people of color collectively, or to African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, or Asian Americans specifically. Among the issues raised with this usage is the fact that the term is not consistently employed to mean a “numerical” minority; rather, it often carries connotations of power, prestige, value, and/or inclusion – or the lack thereof.<sup>64</sup> However, no commonly accepted substitute for these terms has yet emerged, and their use is still widespread in social science literature. This document tries to account for this difficulty by using the modifiers “racial” or “ethnic” before the word “minority,” while acknowledging the limitations of this approach.



## End Notes

- 1 Pope John Paul II, "Homily in the Trans World Dome," *Origins* 28 (February 11, 1999) 601.
- 2 Martin Luther King, Jr., *A Testament of Hope*, edited by Melvin Washington (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986) 208.
- 3 National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Brothers and Sisters to Us: Pastoral Letter on the Sin of Racism* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1979), 2.
- 4 See Appendix One for an explanation of some of the terms used to refer to the various racial and ethnic groups in U.S. society.
- 5 National Research Council, *America Becoming: Racial Trends and Their Consequences, Volume 1*, Neil J. Smelser, William Julius Wilson, and Faith Mitchell, editors (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2001) 1.
- 6 U.S. Census data, 2005.
- 7 U.S. Census data, 2005.
- 8 Edward N. Wolff, "Changes in Household Wealth in the 1980s and 1990s in the U.S." (A Report of the Levy Economics Institute and New York University, 2004).
- 9 National Research Council, *America Becoming*, viii.
- 10 Catholic Bishops of the United States, "Discrimination and the Christian Conscience," (1958). The complete text of this document can be found in John LaFarge, *The Catholic Viewpoint of Race Relations* (New York: Hanover House, 1960) 186-192.
- 11 Pope Benedict XVI, "Visit to the Synagogue of Cologne," (August 2005). Available at [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2005/august/documents](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/august/documents).
- 12 Pope Benedict XVI, "Visit to the Synagogue of Cologne," (August 2005). Here the Holy Father is citing the document of the Second Vatican Council, *Nostra Aetate*, #5.
- 13 *The Sacramentary*, (New York: Catholic Book Publishing, 1985), "Preface for Christian Unity," #76.
- 14 *The Sacramentary*, "Preface of the Holy Trinity," #43.
- 15 Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Washington DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2004) #34.
- 16 Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, #38. Here the pope teaches, "[Solidarity] is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortune of so many people. . . . It is a *firm and persevering determination* to commit oneself to the common good . . . because we are *all* really responsible for *all*" (emphases in the original). Unless otherwise noted, complete texts of official Catholic documents can be found in David O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, editors, *Catholic Social Thought* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992). In the notes, these will be referenced by title and section number.
- 17 "The principle of solidarity, also articulated in terms of 'friendship' or 'social charity,' is a direct demand of human and Christian brotherhood" (*The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1939).
- 18 Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, #39.
- 19 Pope John Paul II, "Address to Bishops of Brazil," *Origins* 10 (July 31, 1980) 135; cited in National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*, #87.
- 20 National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*, #181.
- 21 National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Brothers and Sisters to Us*, p.10
- 22 Pope John Paul II, *Tertio millennio adveniente*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Catholic Conference, 1999) #33.
- 23 National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *1992: A Time for Remembering, Reconciling, and Recommitting Ourselves as a People* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1992), 2.

- 24 The record of Catholic complicity in U.S. racism can be found in the following studies: Cyprian Davis, *The History of Black Catholics in the United States* (New York: Crossroad Press, 1990); Stephen J. Ochs, *Desegregating the Altar: The Josephites and the Struggle for Black Priests 1871-1960* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990); and John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with the Twentieth Century Urban North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
- 25 National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *1992*, 2.
- 26 National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Brothers and Sisters to Us*, 1.
- 27 Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (New York: Oxford Press, 2000) 7.
- 28 David T. Wellman, *Portraits of White Racism*, (New York: Cambridge U. Press, 1993) 4.
- 29 The seminal essay on the reality of white privilege is by Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See the Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies." This article can be found in many anthologies, including one edited by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical White Studies: Looking behind the Mirror* (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1997) 291-299.
- 30 Bishop Dale J. Melczek, *Created in God's Image: A Pastoral Letter on the Sin of Racism and a Call to Conversion* (Gary, IN: Diocesan Chancery, 2003) 22. Available at [www.dcgary.org/bishop/CreatedInGodsImage.pdf](http://www.dcgary.org/bishop/CreatedInGodsImage.pdf).
- 31 McIntosh, "White Privilege," 291.
- 32 Francis Cardinal George, *Dwell in My Love: A Pastoral Letter on Racism* (Chicago: Catholic New World Press 2001) 12-13.
- 33 "How Whites See Themselves," in Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (eds.), *Critical White Studies: Looking Behind the Mirror* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997) 1. They note, "Most whites have not thought much about their race. Few, upon being asked to identify themselves by attributes, would name whiteness among their primary characteristics." See also the work of Joe R. Feagin and Hernan Vera who similarly observe: "Relatively few whites think reflectively about their whiteness except when it is forced on them by encounters with or challenges from black Americans" See *White Racism: The Basics* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 139.
- 34 Feagin and Vera, *White Racism*, 139.
- 35 Hear the following perceptive observation offered by a white woman: "White is transparent. That's the point of being the dominant race. Sure the whiteness is there, but you never think of it. If you're white you never have to think about it. . . . And if white folks remind each other about being white, too often the reminder is about threats by outsiders – nonwhites – who steal white entitlements like good jobs, a fine education, nice neighborhoods, and the good life" (Bonnie Kae Grover, "Growing Up *White* in America?" in Delgado and Stefancic, 34).
- 36 For studies which survey the evolution and creation of white privilege and economic advantage, see Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in 20th Century America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005); Joe R. Feagin, *Racist America: Roots, Realities, and Future Reparations* (New York: Routledge, 2000); and David R. Roediger, *Working toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White: the Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).
- 37 Joe R. Feagin, *Systemic Racism: A Theory of Oppression* (New York: Routledge, 2006) 13.
- 38 See U.S. Department of State, "Indian Treaties and the Removal Act of 1830," <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/dwe/16338.htm> (accessed August 19, 2007); and PBS, "Indian Removal 1814-1858," <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2959.html> (accessed August 19, 2007).
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- 40 "Not All Caucasians are White: The Supreme Court Rejects Citizenship for Asian Indians," <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5076> (accessed August 19, 2007). See also Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (1989).
- 41 The discussion of this and the following two items is indebted to Ira Katznelson's study, *When Affirmative Action Was White* (see note 36).
- 42 Feagin, *Systemic Racism*, 18.
- 43 Among others, see Henry Davis, S.J., *Moral and Pastoral Theology*, Seventh Edition, vol. 2 (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1958) 316.
- 44 Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, "Contribution to World Conference against Racism," #12. Available at [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/austpeace/documents](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/austpeace/documents).
- 45 NCCB, *Economic Justice for All*, #73.
- 46 National Research Council, *America Becoming*, Volume 1, 17.
- 47 George, *Dwell in my Love*, 12-13.
- 48 George, *Dwell in My Love*, 12.

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## Poverty and Racism: Overlapping Threats to the Common Good

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- 50 National Research Council, *American Becoming*, Volume 1, 11.
- 51 National Research Council, *A Common Destiny: Blacks and American Society* (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1989) 49.
- 52 Cf. "Women and Minorities Still Face 'Glass Ceiling,'" *New York Times* (March 16, 1995) C22.
- 53 "White Males and the Manager Class," *New York Times* (March 17, 1995) A7.
- 54 Catholic Charities USA, *Justice for Newcomers: A Catholic Call for Solidarity and Reform* (2005 Policy Paper).
- 55 For one of many studies examining the moral implications of the Katrina event, see Bryan N. Massingale, "About Katrina: Catastrophe Exposes U.S. Race Reality," *National Catholic Reporter* (March 2, 2007) 10-14.
- 56 Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967) 11.
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- 58 Among others, see the seminal works of Jonathan Kozol, especially his *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America* (New York: Crown Press, 2005).
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- 60 Prison and Jail Inmates- mid Year 2006, NCJ 217675, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, June 2007, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/pjim06.pdf>
- 61 Massingale, "About Katrina," 13.
- 62 The discussion in this appendix is indebted to the reflections found in Melczek, *Created in God's Image*, 39. In significant ways, however, the explanations presented here expand that discussion.
- 63 "Race (U.S. Census)," *Webster's Online Dictionary*, [www.webster-dictionary.org/definition/race%20\(U.S.%20census\)](http://www.webster-dictionary.org/definition/race%20(U.S.%20census)). Accessed October 28, 2004; emphasis added.
- 64 These concerns are eloquently expressed by Bishop Edward K. Braxton, "There Are No 'Minority' Americans," *America* 182 (June 3-10, 2000) 6-8.



Alexandria VA  
[www.CatholicCharitiesUSA.org](http://www.CatholicCharitiesUSA.org)