



**We are
Called**

TO HEAL. TO UNITE. TO JUSTICE.

Team Reflection – Huddle

No. 5 Naming Racism as a Public Health Crisis

Naming racism is the first step to addressing and reversing its hold. Cleveland, OH, Milwaukee, WI, and more than 185 other jurisdictions across the country have named racism a public health crisis.

Naming racism a crisis is the first step, the diagnosis. Actions and remedies can then follow. Like many complex diseases, treatments for racism are painstaking and difficult. They require those in privilege to let go and lament the injustice that benefits them. The lament of the privileged is an essential step toward reconciliation. It can be the beginning of compassion and solidarity. Fr. Bryan Massingale, professor of Christian ethics at Fordham University, identifies the power of lament in racial reconciliation. [5.5]

He writes, "laments are cries of anguish and outrage, groans of deep pain and grief, utterances of profound protest and righteous indignation over injustice, wails of mourning and sorrow in the face of unbearable suffering." It is a passionate protest of such brokenness in the world. Lamenting is a paradox of protest and praise. While it expresses the wrenching circumstances, it also proclaims that God is present amid the hardship and offers a message of compassion and deliverance. [5.6]

In the face of racial injustice, he urges white individuals to lament as well. The privileged can lament. It opens up a new horizon for understanding others and society.

Consider

Have I ever lamented or shed tears because of an injustice I experienced or observed? It may have been in a movie or performance.

Let us pray together,

*God of our lament, we know you are with those in grief and affliction.
Keep the sorrows of those who are marginalized close to your heart.
Fill them with your hope, cloak them in your power and presence.
Give us the courage to name our complacency and to work for change.*

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[5.1] Bryan N. Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church* (New York: Orbis Books) 2010, 111–121.

[5.2] Massingale, 205–207.