

NOVENA PRAYER: PROMOTING PEACE IN OUR COMMUNITIES



Purpose: To stand in solidarity with congregations across the Greater Cincinnati Area to fast and pray for unity and hope during a time that could be tumultuous in our city, as citizens brace themselves for the Trial of Officer Ray Tensing for the shooting death of Samuel Dubose.

We pray for reconciliation in our city according to Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians, "All this from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation."

Period of Fasting & Prayer:

"The minimum requirement for fasting allows a person to eat one full meal. Two smaller meals may be taken, not to equal one full meal. If one chooses to fast, it should be a sacrifice which includes some degree of hunger and self-restraint. In addition, prayer should be included as a part of the fast." *USCCB, Information on Fasting*

Certainly, the Promoting of Peace In Our Communities is an appropriate way to express this sacrifice and prayer.

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Day One: October 31 – Monday of the Thirty-First Week in Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer – Almighty and merciful God, by whose gift your faithful offer you right and praiseworthy service, grant we pray, that we hasten without stumbling to receive the things you have promised. Through Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Scripture & Documents of the Church:

- **On a sabbath Jesus went to dine at the home of one of the leading Pharisees. He said to the host who invited him, “When you hold a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or sisters or your relatives or your wealthy neighbors, in case they may invite you back and you have repayment. Rather, when you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.” Luke 14: 12-14**

2. We insist that “the heart of the race question is moral and religious. It concerns the rights of man and our attitude toward our fellow man.... Discrimination based on the accidental fact of race or color, and as such injurious to human rights, regardless of personal qualities or achievements, cannot be reconciled with the truth that God has created all men with equal rights and equal dignity.”

3. We reaffirm that segregation implies that people of one race are not fit to associate with another “by sole fact of race regardless of individual qualities.... We cannot reconcile such a judgment with the Christian view of man’s nature and rights.” These principals apply to all forms of discrimination and segregation based on prejudice. In our immediate and urgent concern for the rights of Negroes, we do not overlook disabilities visited upon other racial and national groups. On Racial Harmony: A Statement Approved by the Administrative Board, National Catholic Welfare Conference, August 23, 1963

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Day Two: November 1 – Solemnity of All Saints

Opening Prayer – Almighty and ever-living God, by whose gift we venerate in one celebration the merits of all the Saints, bestow on us, we pray, through the prayers of so many intercessors, an abundance of the reconciliation with you for which we earnestly long. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

- **When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying:**

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.”

Christian Charity

9. But more than justice is involved. There is also the divine command: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Our present Holy Father, Pope Paul VI, at the beginning of his pontificate, reminds us that “Revelation teaches us to love all men, whatever their condition, for they have all been redeemed by the same Savior; and it obliges us to offer to those who have least, the means of arriving in dignity at a more human life.”

10. It is clear that the racial question confronts the conscience of every man, no matter what his degree of direct or indirect involvement. Indeed, the conscience of the nation is on trial. The most crucial test of love of God is love of neighbor.

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In the words of the beloved Apostle: “If anyone says ‘I love God’ and hates his brother, he is a liar. For how can he who does not love his brother, whom he sees, love God whom he does not see?”

11. We can show our Christian charity by a quiet and courageous determination to make the quest for racial harmony a matter of personal involvement. We must go beyond slogans and generalizations about color and realize that all of us are human beings, men, women, and children, all sharing the same human nature and dignity, with the same desires, hopes and feeling. We should try to know and understand one another. On Racial Harmony: A Statement Approved by the Administrative Board, National Catholic Welfare Conference, August 23, 1963

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Day Three: November 2 – The Commemoration of All The Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day)

Opening Prayer – Listen kindly to our prayers, O Lord, and as our faith in your Son, raised from the dead, is deepened, so may our hope of resurrection for your departed servants also find new strength. Through Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

- **The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction and their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace.**

For if before men, indeed, they be punished, yet is their hope full of immortality; chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed, because God tried them and found them worthy of himself. As gold in the furnace, he proved them, and as sacrificial offerings he took them to himself.

In the time of their visitation they shall shine, and shall dart about as sparks through stubble; they shall judge nations and rule over peoples, and the LORD shall be their King forever. Those who trust in him shall understand truth, and the faithful shall abide with him in love: because grace and mercy are with his holy ones, and his care is with his elect. Wisdom 3: 1 - 9

- I. Twenty years ago this conference promulgated the pastoral letter *Brothers and Sisters to Us: U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Racism in Our Day*, which stated that racism is a sin because it blots out the image of God and divides the human family. It also provides ideas and programs on how to eradicate racism.

Certainly, much progress has been accomplished. Hopefully, in our discussion, some of you will, in your diocese and archdiocese, talk about what you are doing that is effective in eradicating racism. Yet as much as we would like to believe that the question of racism in society and in the

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Church is behind us, ongoing racial incidents continue to remind us that it is a scar in our society and Church that we must face.

Examples are blatant incidents such as the brutal killing of James Byrd in Jasper, Texas, or in Independence, Virginia, where a White man by the name of Emmett Cresel Jr. set Garrett Johnson, a Black man, on fire and then beheaded him. Then there were the church burnings last summer. Though they were not all racially motivated, too many were. Those are the blatant incidents of racism that get media attention and quick condemnation by people of faith and goodwill. However, there are the more subtle incidents of racism that take place in society and the Church. There is the African American youth who is eyed or followed in the mall or stores. There is the well-dressed African American male who is unable to get a cab, not because he cannot pay for the ride, but simply because he is Black. Only 2 percent of people of color have decision making positions in dioceses and archdioceses. There are 140 websites pushing racial hatred and many of these are directed toward children, the belief being that if you capture the mind of children you have them

forever. Love Thy Neighbor As Thyself: U.S. Catholic Bishops Speak Against Racism, Address to the United States Catholic Conference for Their Dialogue on Racism, By Most Rev. Curtis J. Guillory, SVD

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Day Four November 3 – Saint Martin de Porres

Opening Prayer – O God, who led Saint Martin de Porres by the path of humility to heavenly glory, grant that we may so follow his radiant example in this life as to merit to be exalted with him in heaven. Through Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

- **The tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to Jesus, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” So Jesus addressed this parable to them.**

“What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it? And when he does find it, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy and, upon his arrival home, he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them, ‘Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.’ I tell you, in just the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance.

“Or what woman having ten coins and losing one would not light a lamp and sweep the house, searching carefully until she finds it? And when she does find it, she calls together her friends and neighbors and says to them, ‘Rejoice with me because I have found the coin that I lost.’ In just the same way, I tell you, there will be rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” Luke 15: 1 – 10

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The Gospel of Jesus Christ and the social teachings of the Church call upon us as teachers and as believers to go beyond tolerance. Tolerance might be the beginning but it is not the end. Tolerance of another means accommodation, existing at a comfortable distance, or co-existing with the other. Tolerance calls one to deal with another of a different ethnic or racial background as required by the law. However, as you so well know, the law does not change hearts. The Church today is being called upon to change hearts with the Word of God, the social teachings of the Church and programs geared toward understanding and respect for the privilege of difference.

In Galatians (3:28) “Since everyone of you that has been baptized has been clothed in Christ, there can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither slave or free man, there can be neither male nor female—for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Paul calls us to go beyond tolerance. He calls us to dialogue, to engage in conversation, in extended interaction. He calls us to be reconciled about the past, embrace the reconciled past and be strengthened to face the future. It is important to mention and to praise the voice of the conference and that of individual bishops who have put out documents urging acceptance and reconciliation. However, in spite of the progress that has been made, much needs to be done. We are not necessarily advocating new programs, but much good could be done if we revisited and implemented what we have already written: documents such as *Brothers and Sisters to Us*, *Economic Justice For All* and *Love One Another*.

These and others such as the Vatican’s *Towards a Fraternal Society* are just as relevant today as they were when they were first released. The time has come for us to help our people engage in honest and constructive dialogue that will lead to this recon-ciliation, trust and understanding. There are those who feel there are no racial problems. Others see race in every incident. Still others, and perhaps the majority of people, want to deal with this scar, but do not know how or where to begin. Armed with the Word of God and the social teachings of the Church, we must help our people so that Jesus’ prayer, “That they might all be one,” can indeed be a reality. And so let us not grow weary or tired in our own efforts to eradicate racism and to promote true peace and reconciliation among those we serve. Love Thy Neighbor As Thyself: U.S. Catholic Bishops Speak Against Racism, Address to the United States Catholic Conference for Their Dialogue on Racism, By Most Rev. Curtis J. Guillery, SVD

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Day Five: November 4 – Saint Charles Borromeo, Bishop

Opening Prayer – Preserve in the midst of your people, we ask, O Lord, the spirit with which you filled the Bishop Saint Charles Borromeo, that your Church may be constantly renewed and, by conforming herself to the likeness of Christ, may show his face to the world. Through Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

- **Join with others in being imitators of me, brothers and sisters, and observe those who thus conduct themselves according to the model you have in us. For many, as I have often told you and now tell you even in tears, conduct themselves as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction. Their God is their stomach; their glory is in their “shame.” Their minds are occupied with earthly things.**

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we also await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified Body by the power that enables him also to bring all things into subjection to himself. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, beloved. Philippians 3: 17 – 4: 1

Although I have been in the diocese of Bismarck, North Dakota, for a little less than two years, it has become clear to me that there is both subtle and not-so-subtle discrimination directed at the Native American population. I would like to suggest some signs of this discrimination that still exist today. Because so many people do not understand the Treaty Rights that have existed for years, they make the judgment that support of the Native American is nothing more than welfare.

As a result the American Indian is often seen as irresponsible and lazy. Because of the segregation that the reservation brings about, people of other races have little understanding of customs and traditions of our Indian brothers and sisters. In addition, there is little interest in learning about them. Although efforts are being made by both church and state, many Native Americans have limited opportunities for effective education and health care.

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Attempts to move into communities outside the reservation can result in unfounded fear. Most feel very unwelcome when they are the minority race.

In my estimation there is much denial of the racism that exists in our own communities. People either don't see it or don't want to see it. When we don't see the problem, there is little chance that it can be corrected. Love Thy Neighbor As Thyself: U.S. Catholic Bishops Speak Against Racism, Address to the United States Catholic Conference for Their Dialogue on Racism, By Most Rev. Paul A. Zipfel

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Day Six: November 5– Saturday of the Thirty-First Week In Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer – Almighty and ever-living God, grant that we may conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart. Through Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

- **Jesus said to his disciples: “I tell you, make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth, so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones.**

If, therefore, you are not trustworthy with dishonest wealth, who will trust you with true wealth? If you are not trustworthy with what belongs to another, who will give you what is yours? No servant can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all these things and sneered at him. And he said to them, “You justify yourselves in the sight of others, but God knows your hearts; for what is of human esteem is an abomination in the sight of God.” Luke 16: 9 - 15

Racism toward the Hispanic/Latino community is a historic and well-documented fact in the United States. One can read the history of the different regions of this country to see that violence and hatred have been directed toward Latinos. Today we see the effects of racism in the political and economic arena, in education, in social concerns, and in our Church. In the political arena, race is being used to promote anti-Latino sentiments, particularly in statewide initiatives like California’s Proposition 187. Other similar initiatives—like affirmative action, anti-bilingual education, and the English Only Movement— are being promoted throughout the United States, and the Latino community is the target of many of these efforts.

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These initiatives divide the greater community and harm the image of the Latino by promoting negative stereotypes. Economically, Hispanics have an annual market value of \$372 billion, and yet in many communities they are red-lined and denied credit by a variety of businesses, making it difficult for them to secure loans, to buy insurance, to purchase homes and automobiles.

When our economy meets difficult times, it is often the Latino immigrant that is used as the scapegoat. In many of our communities, Hispanics have the highest high school drop-out rate, and only 10 percent of Hispanics have a college degree. Recent changes in federal and state laws may keep Latinos and other minority groups from attending colleges and universities. As bishop, I have witnessed and heard church employees refer to a competent sixty-year-old Latina secretary as “the little Mexican girl.” When asked why certain programs were not offered to Latinos, the response was “they can’t be taught.” Latinos were not counted as parishioners for fear that the parish would have to offer them services; or when services were requested by Latinos, responses were made “What more do they want, they already have a Mass?” [And when asked if] diocesan and parish programs designed for leadership people might be offered in Spanish, a response is given “You don’t understand, this is only for leaders.” The point is *what is the source of this struggle for the Latino population*, and why? I believe it to be the effect of racism in society. Love Thy Neighbor As Thyself: U.S. Catholic Bishops Speak Against Racism, Address to the United States Catholic Conference for Their Dialogue on Racism, By Most Rev. Gerald R. Barnes

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Day Seven: November 6 – Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer – Almighty and merciful God, graciously keep from us all adversity, so that, unhindered in mind and body alike, we may pursue in freedom of heart the things that are yours. Through Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

- **Some Sadducees, those who deny that there is a resurrection, came forward. Jesus said to them, “The children of this age marry and remarry; but those who are deemed worthy to attain to the coming age and to the resurrection of the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage.**

They can no longer die, for they are like angels; and they are the children of God because they are the ones who will rise. That the dead will rise even Moses made known in the passage about the bush, when he called out Lord,’ the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive.” Luke 20: 27, 34 - 38

Racism is the theory or practice which assumes that one race or ethnic stock is superior to another. It denies the equal dignity of all the members of the human family... Racism continues to exist in our time despite Christian teaching. We should remember, however, that racism as an ideology is a rather late phenomenon in history. Only at the end of the eighteenth century was the word “race” used for the first time to The theories about essential differences of a hereditary biological nature led to fostering at that time and subsequently a racist ideology which in turn served as a convenient tool to justify the practice already in use by slave traders and profiteers.

The oppression of others can flourish only when the basic truths of God’s creative action are forgotten. This was dramatically demonstrated again in the 1930s and 1940s when a genetic concept of race became popular.

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In 1984 the Catholic Bishops of Louisiana insisted, “There is no ethnic hierarchy among the children of God; ethnic gifts deserve the same reverence and respect that we hold for life itself.” We also lamented that racism still affected our country, our state and even our Church. Twice since then, in 1989 and 1990, the Church in Louisiana has condemned all forms or expressions of racism.

Let us then make it clear again. To hold that one race is inherently superior to another is a serious sin. To persist obstinately in this stance is incompatible with God’s original creation and our redemption in Christ Jesus. Love Thy Neighbor As Thyself: U.S. Catholic Bishops Speak Against Racism, Address to the United States Catholic Conference for Their Dialogue on Racism, By Catholic Bishops of Louisiana, Most Rev. Gregory M. Aymond, Most Rev. Dominic Carmon, SVD, Most Rev. William B. Friend, Most Rev. Alfred C. Hughes, Most Rev. Sam G. Jacobs, Most Rev. Michael Jarrell, Most Rev. Edward J. O’Donnell, Most Rev. Francis B. Schutte, and Most Rev. Jude Speyrer

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Day Eight: November 7 – Monday of the Thirty-Second Week in Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer – Almighty and merciful God, graciously keep from us all adversity, so that, unhindered in mind and body alike, we may pursue in freedom of heart the things that are yours. Through Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

- **Jesus said to his disciples, “Things that cause sin will inevitably occur, but woe to the one through whom they occur. It would be better for him if a millstone were put around his neck and he be thrown into the sea than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he wrongs you seven times in one day and returns to you seven times saying, ‘I am sorry,’ you should forgive him.”**

And the Apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith.” The Lord replied, “If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.”

Sacred Scripture offers us a graced corrective. If we place ourselves humbly and sincerely before the revelation which God gives to us in Sacred Scripture and pray for the gift of His Holy Spirit to help us to understand, we will be strengthened in the understanding of God’s way and given the grace to live it. Hence we recommend for this purpose reflections on the Sacred Scriptures. It is our hope that the pondering of God’s Word will then lead to an inner con-version of heart and some constructive initiatives.

CONCLUSION: The good news of the victory of Jesus Christ over sin and death encourages us to proclaim anew this call to conversion and His invitation to new life. We cannot tolerate racism. We cannot allow fears and hatreds to drive us apart. We repent and ask for forgiveness for any failures in the past or present and the grace to recognize the seriousness of this injustice and to resist it more strongly and forthrightly. We pledge with God’s grace to be more faithful to the deeper and fuller implications of the gospel message entrusted to us. We seek to promote the reconciliation that God offers to us in Christ Jesus.

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We want to work with all people of good will. We seek collaboration with the faithful of other religions. We thank God who has made us all in His image and likeness, called us to call Him our Father and to live as brothers and sisters in one family. Love Thy Neighbor As Thyself: U.S. Catholic Bishops Speak Against Racism, Address to the United States Catholic Conference for Their Dialogue on Racism, By Catholic Bishops of Louisiana, Most Rev. Gregory M. Aymond, Most Rev. Dominic Carmon, SVD, Most Rev. William B. Friend, Most Rev. Alfred C. Hughes, Most Rev. Sam G. Jacobs, Most Rev. Michael Jarrell, Most Rev. Edward J. O'Donnell, Most Rev. Francis B. Schutte, and Most Rev. Jude Speyrer

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Day Nine: November 8 – Tuesday of the Thirty-Second Week In Ordinary Time

Opening Prayer – Almighty and merciful God, graciously keep from us all adversity, so that, unhindered in mind and body alike, we may pursue in freedom of heart the things that are yours. Through Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen. Through Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

- **Beloved: You must say what is consistent with sound doctrine, namely, that older men should be temperate, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, love, and endurance. Similarly, older women should be reverent in their behavior, not slanderers, not addicted to drink, teaching what is good, so that they may train younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, chaste, good homemakers, under the control of their husbands, so that the word of God may not be discredited.**

Urge the younger men, similarly, to control themselves, showing yourself as a model of good deeds in every respect, with integrity in your teaching, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be criticized, so that the opponent will be put to shame without anything bad to say about us.

For the grace of God has appeared, saving all and training us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age, as we await the blessed hope, the appearance of the glory of the great God and of our savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to deliver us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people as his own, eager to do what is good.

Titus 2: 1 – 8, 11 - 14

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The preacher's pulpit, the politician's podium and the print and electronic media all bear some responsibility to encourage a far more civil, responsible and respectful approach to national debate and the discussion of issues in our country today.

A wise and ancient Catholic maxim has always insisted that we are to "hate the sin and love the sinner." At the heart of this time-honored wisdom is the simple recognition that some things are wrong and yet we still distinguish between what is done and who does it.

Increasingly, there is a tendency to disparage the name and reputation, the character and life, of a person because he or she holds a different position. The identifying of some people as "bigots" and "hate mongers" simply because they hold a position contrary to another's has unfortunately become all too commonplace today. Locally, we have witnessed rhetorical hyperbole that, I believe, long since crossed the line between reasoned discourse and irresponsible demagoguery.

It should not be acceptable to denounce someone who favors immigration reform that includes the process to citizenship as a "traitor" and "unpatriotic." ...

Why is it so important that we respect both our constitutional right to free speech and our moral obligation that we not bear false witness against another? A profoundly basic reason is that we do not live alone. While each of us can claim a unique identity, we are, nonetheless, called to live out our lives in relationship with others -- in some form of community.

All human community is rooted in this deep stirring of God's created plan within us that brings us into ever-widening circles of relationship: first with our parents, then our family, the Church and a variety of community experiences, educational, economic, cultural, social and, of course, political. We are by nature social and tend to come together so that in the various communities of which we are a part, we can experience full human development. All of this is part of God's plan initiated in creation and reflected in the natural law that calls us to live in community.

The call to truthfulness is far from being a denial of freedom of speech. Rather, it is a God-given obligation to respect the very function of human speech. We are not free to say whatever we want about another, but only what is true. To the extent that freedom is improperly used to sever the bonds of trust that bind us together as a people, to that extent it is irresponsible.

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The commandment that obliges us to avoid false witness also calls us to tell the truth. We, therefore, have an obligation to ascertain that what we say or hear or read is really the truth. Copyright © 2012, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Cardinal Donald Wuerl, "Civil Discourse: Speaking Truth in Love," © 2011, Archdiocese of Washington. Used with Permission. All rights reserved. Quote from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, second edition, copyright © 2000, Libreria Editrice Vaticana-United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C. Used with permission. All rights reserved. This text may be reproduced in whole or in part without alteration for nonprofit educational use, provided such reprints are not sold and include this notice.

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