

Subversive Habits Book Study

Session Two: Chapters 3, 4, and 5

offered by FutureChurch

Opening Song: *Lift Every Voice and Sing*

Text: James Wheldon Johnson

Music: J. Rosamond Johnson

Visit <https://www.jamesweldonjohnson.org/lift-every-voice-and-sing> to learn more about this hymn.

Small Group Questions:

1. In 1452 when Pope Nicholas V issued Dum Diversas which sanctioned slavery. In 1839, Pope Gregory XVI condemned slavery in Supremo Apostolatus. According to Dr. Williams, the 1943 encyclical Mystici Corporis Christi represented a turning point in Catholic history because the Church rejected the legitimacy of racial and national distinctions and emphasized equality among the followers of Christ, a teaching that helped African American Catholics in their struggle for liberation. As the church evolved, the changes resulting from the Second Vatican Council empowered Black Catholics to enter into a new phase of empowerment, voice, and public action. As you gain a fuller understanding of the evolution of the Church in terms of authentic racial justice, what are your reactions? How do you relate to this history? What do you expect of Church leadership today?
2. The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. set off a revolution in the United States and the Catholic Church. It was the event that helped fire up the Black Catholic Power Movement with many Black Catholics, priests, nuns, lay, organizing to take up the freedom struggle. How did you react to Dr. King's assassination? What did it stir for you?
3. Dr. Williams relates the story of Sr. Martin de Porres Grey (now Dr. Patricia Grey) weeping alone at night because of the pain inflicted by white sisters in her congregation. Despite her sufferings, Sr. Grey went on to lead one of the most important movements in the Catholic Church -- the formation of the National Black Sisters' Conference. What did you learn from Dr. Williams' accounts regarding the founding of the [National Black Sisters' Conference](#)? Why is this moment in Catholic history so important? Here are some of the NBSC latest statements. How are they impacting the Church today? How are you responding to their words and action?

The [NBSC response](#) to Archbishop Gomez's statement regarding Black Lives Matter.

The [NBSC statement](#) on the conviction of Derek Chauvin.

The [NBSC response](#) to policies that restrict voting rights.

4. Raymond S. Bernard, SJ was an ally to Black Women Religious at a time when White Catholic religious leaders regularly employed segregation and exclusion. He conducted formal investigations of white sisterhoods' admissions policies. He criticized white congregations that excluded Black women, and spotlighted those who accepted them, even making a list of white congregations that accepted Black women. At one point he wrote,

I myself know of a congregation in a largely non-Catholic region of this country which has had requests to start schools in 19 different cities, but simply has not enough womanpower. The superior has had novenas made in honor of Blessed Martin de Porres for plentiful vocations—but if Blessed Martin de Porres sent her two dozen Negro applicants, it is quite doubtful whether they would be accepted. Many other institutes which complain about the scarcity of vocations have drawn a color-line on would-be applicants—yet continue to pray for more vocations to arrive at their door.

His many acts of solidarity, support and courage are documented throughout the readings for today. What is the value of Catholic allies in the fight for racial and reparative justice today? Who are the Catholic allies that you admire and who have transformed your way of thinking on this issue?

Large Group Chat Sharing Responses

Why has the church not rescinded the Doctrine of Discovery?

I can't forget the words of the little boy that Sr. Josita talked about... "Why do they hate us?"

The main message I heard from Sister Colbert is that they are not waiting for USCCB or Gomez or whoever - but they are doing what they are called to do!

May we never lose hope. Keep hope alive.

Women will always take the lead!

Much work to be done to be good allies

Thank you, Jesus, for the beautiful spirit of love and compassion and perseverance that Sr. Josita brought to us tonight!

Thank you FutureChurch!

Frustratingly slow pace of change--but hope from Sr. Josita and from small group colleagues.

We are not truly the Mystical Body of Christ until we see each other as part of our own bodies ... and God is teaching us how to do so

The value of allies is important for racial healing

We are One Body. We can all speak up and make good trouble.

Thanks again to Dr. Williams for her commitment to telling these stories.

I was heartened by the developing relationship among the OSP and the four IHM congregations who share a common history -- some of it erased until just recently.

I agree; thank God for Future Church

Gratitude for everyone this evening. Each of you are choosing to be an ally not a bystander.

"Focus"

the shame and sadness that the Gospel, the Eucharist, Catholic Social Teaching, examples of Dorothy Day, Merton and Archbishop Romero - don't enable us to be any different from the prevailing racist and exclusive culture

We at St. Ann are continuing our initiative to get the first six African American candidates for sainthood canonized.

Jesus was not white -- Have you seen a crucifix with a black corpus??

Thank God for the NBSC example in addressing so clearly anti-racism. You show us how to call the question with directness, courage and respect.

Energizing discussions in our small group. Thanks to all.

MLK: The Arc of the Moral Universe Bends toward Justice!

Believe it or not Pope Francis did not know about that Bull that enslaved people!

We are not truly the Mystical Body of Christ until we see each other as part of our own bodies ... and God is teaching us how to do so

Be welcoming and encouraging for the well-being of all

it has been slow reading because so difficult and demoralizing, hoping and praying we see better days. Thank you future church for providing these sessions and tools to get informed and involved

Thanks our breakout group for your deep and insightful words and sharing.

I keep thinking about reparations. How do we repair the damage?

huge thanks to the Sister Josita Colbert for her dedication to a life-giving call; and the other Sisters along with her

Thank you to Future Church for this forum. I really appreciated listening to Sister Josita this evening and being with our small group also. so much to do to truly live the gospel in our world that is so divided. Hope is strong! I am grateful for the witness of my parents and the Christian Family Movement in which I was raised. Hope is strong!

thankful to the NBSC for their Holy perseverance, and for steadfast hopefulness. Please rain down these blessings on those yearning for change of resistance.

Let us stand in Spirit during the Anthem!

I feel compelled to make sure I have discussions about racism with my children and grandchildren. Maybe the best way for me to start would be to share how I never considered myself racist until I started reading Ibrim Kendi, Robin D'Angelo and Shannon dee Williams

Spread the Good News! The NBSC is leading the Church!

St. Rose del Lima Church in Bay St. Louis, has a famous mural called "Jesus in the Oaks" that you can look up.

Thanks to [my group] for a love-filled conversation!

Amen! Spread the Good News! The NBSC is leading the Church!

Thank you, FutureChurch, for this opportunity.

Never forget.

Thank you, Sr. Josita, Deb, and Russ for these sessions!

Sister Josita was indeed marvelous! Enjoyed my breakout group in room six. To those participants the book example I referenced is on bottom of page 144 and top of page 145

Are we catholic enough?

Have a good week, everyone!

Some of us are going to Rome to hand deliver the 3000+ letters to Pope Francis to canonize Black Catholics. Feel free to help us make the trip....

Thanks, Russ, for the music. brings back many great memories

The damage can't be repaired until we stop thinking of reparations as simply monetary. We need to heal the broken relationship between the Church and people of color; which means the church needs to acknowledge and atone for her sins.

Thank you all!

Thank you, Sr. Josita for your continued faithfulness to your call! You were a blessing to us tonight!

AMEN!

Sister Josita was EXCELLENT!

Thank you Russ, Deb and Sr. Josita and all of YOU.

Thank you Sr. Josita for EVERYTHING you do!

Proof of the Holy Spirit is that the Catholic Church - with centuries of scandal, sin, skullduggery, abuse, violence, complicity with imperialism, racism - still produces servants of God and seekers of justice

Amen!

Thank you, Sister Josita!!!

without FutureChurch my Catholic life would be diminished - just saying

Amen

Amen

Closing Prayer

Ever present God, you called us to be in relationship with one another and promised to dwell wherever two or three are gathered. In our community, we are many different people; we come from many different places, have many different cultures. Open our hearts that we may be bold in finding the riches of inclusion and the treasures of diversity among us.

We pray:

When our eyes do not see the gravity of racial injustice,
Shake us from our slumber and open us up.

When out of fear we are frozen into inaction,
Give us a spirit of bravery.

When we try our best but say the wrong things,
Give us a spirit of humility.

When the chaos of this dies down,
Give us a lasting spirit of solidarity.

When it becomes easier to point fingers outward,
Help us to examine our own hearts.

God of truth, in your wisdom, Enlighten Us.
God of love, in your mercy, Forgive Us.
God of hope in your kindness, Heal Us.
Creator of All People, in your generosity, Guide Us.

Racism breaks your heart,
break our hearts for what breaks yours, O God.

We make this prayer, through Christ Jesus, AMEN.

- MLK