

Homily 4th Sunday of Year B 2021

Jesus cures a man from unclean spirits that had seized and taken control of his life. Naively, we do not believe people are seized by evil spirits today because we have names for various illnesses. We celebrate Racial Justice with shame, because racism is alive and well. If that is not an evil spirit then nothing is. Sadly, it is one among too many other evil spirits. In his miracle, Jesus is more concerned with healing the person possessed than the evil spirits? Of course, Jesus wants to rid the world of evil whatever form it takes but his prime concern is for the one he heals; that includes us – all of us! At the root of racism as with many other evils is the lack of respect and reverence for life; one's own life and the life of others. Life in all its forms is sacred (including that of creation). It deserves the greatest, respect, reverence and honour. Any lack of respect for others means a lack of respect for oneself. Racial Justice impels, demands that we show dignity, respect and honour to all life, to everybody, without exception, however difficult this may be. Racial Justice teaches us that every single human person, is a temple of God, a treasure house, and only through dignity and respect will we be able to share our treasures with them and they share their treasures with us.

Segregation, discrimination, Football! By Jade Barnes, aged 11 (abridged)

I shivered in the cold, damp weather, dressed in my light blue shorts and white polo-neck. After wrapping my scarf around my neck, I pulled my socks up to my knees, but they slid back down again. I started running into the stadium. *"Oi, come here, you were meant to be playing 10 minutes ago,"* I heard a man shout.

I ran into the stadium and stood in the middle of the pitch. The referee stood waiting for me and threw the football into the air. *"Wait a minute,"* the player opposite me said. I stood still horrified. The referee gestured as the player walked towards the ref. I walked towards him as well. But he said: *"Not you, you dirty piece of filth."*

I stood filled with depression as a tear dropped from my eye. The manager told me that we needed to talk. I turned and smiled at him and followed him off the pitch. He told me not to worry about it, because I wouldn't be playing any more. I knew why, it was because of my skin. The dark colour it is. I had already been put down because of this before. I was used to it by now. But I wouldn't let this bring me down. I went to the overgrown fields in the distance, and I set up my own football club. I painted the pitch lines after cutting the grass. Then I gathered a group of people together. I didn't care what colour skin they had, or if they had a disability. I didn't care because we are all one. I still run the club. Sometimes an odd team won't play against us. But we don't mind, we just think, they don't know the true meaning of football and that it unites us.

One Sunday a minister delivered a sermon in 10 minutes, about half the usual length. He explained, *"I regret to inform you that my dog, who is very fond of eating paper, ate nearly half my sermon notes."* After the service, a visitor from another church shook hands with the preacher and said, *"Reverend, if that dog of yours has any pups, I want to give one to my minister."*