

TEACHING TUESDAYS: SIGNS OF PARISH VITALITY BLESSING OUR COMMUNITY



"O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." Book of Common Prayer pg. 815

Matthew 5:1-10 The Inclusive Bible

"When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on the mountainside, and after he sat down and the disciples had gathered around, Jesus began to teach them: "Blessed are those who are poor in spirit: the kingdom of heaven is theirs. Blessed are those who are mourning: they will be consoled. Blessed are those who are gentle: they will inherit the land. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice: they will have their fill. Blessed are those who show mercy to others: they will be shown mercy. Blessed are those whose hearts are clean: they will see God. Blessed are those who work for peace: they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of their struggle for justice: the kingdom of heaven is theirs."

Recording:

Here is the [entire recording of our Teaching Tuesday session of May 25th, 2021.](#)

Notes:

Here is what we have written about this Vital Sign: *"A healthy parish advocates for and partners with the local community and other organizations. This engagement focuses on the welfare of our neighbors and justice initiatives such as food scarcity, racial inequities, and immigration concerns. The parish is invested in the health and well-being of its local community."*

Hopefully you hear that we are talking about something a bit different from the usual conversations about evangelism or outreach. We're talking a parish being concerned and engaged with promoting the common good, caring about the good of its local community and actively advocating for others. They may not ever enter our church or come to worship with us, but they will know that *"we are on their side."*

We Tuesday met and heard from our new Missioner for Justice and Equity, Hazel Monae. She brought us up to speed on the work of studying the history of slavery and reparations in the diocese, and we found out there are ways we can participate. We can do a thorough cleaning of our buildings to locate lost documents and records which may shed light on racial inequities in our past and further the work of reparations and repentance.

In our Breakout Groups we asked, *"What are the justice and racial equity conversations happening around and within your community right now, and what work has your parish done to develop its message and response to justice and equity issues?"*

Do you know if your parish has begun to develop *its voice* around justice and racial equities issues? That voice can be specific justice oriented ministries and advocacy, preparedness with press releases to speak against examples of systemic racism we so often see today, or promoting and hosting anti-racism work like our Sacred Ground curriculum.

An amazing resource for a hopeful engagement with justice, racial equity and anti-racism in our church's history and future is the new book [The Church Cracked](#) Open by Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers. She writes on page 94 of the Spirit which animated Jesus being our strength of selfless service of today, *"The same Spirit that Jesus received now rests on anyone who follows him. God invites us into a covenant, where by the power of the Spirit we can choose to allow our hearts to break, and then take up the pieces - our lives, our goods, our love, our privileges - and share it all like a broken loaf of communion bread."*

Previous Weeks' Recap Documents with links and resources:

Week One on [Compelling Mission and Vision.](#)

Week Two on [Clear Path of Discipleship.](#)

Week Three on [Faithful Financial Practices.](#)

Week Four on [Inspiring & Capable Leadership.](#)

Week Five on [Welcoming & Connecting Ministries.](#)

Week Six on [Uplifting & Inviting Worship.](#)

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