



# OPEN WIDE OUR HEARTS

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## Higher Education Toolkit

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Subcommittee for the Promotion of Racial Justice and Reconciliation seeks to teach about and to witness to the intrinsic dignity of the human person as an antidote to the grave sin of racism. The Committee of bishops explores and implements concrete solutions to address the racism that still pervades our society and our Church today, and works in collaborative ways to strengthen the response of all people to this evil.

In 2018, the U.S. bishops shared a pastoral letter titled *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love*. We warmly encourage all school presidents to share the accompanying toolkit with faculty and staff, fostering a school community where students and educators grow together in faith, understanding, and unity.

### The Pastoral Letter

Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring  
Call to Love

### Prayers

Prayer to Address the Sin of Racism  
Prayer to Heal Racial Division

## Invitation from Bishop Joseph Perry



An anonymous Japanese philosopher is famous for saying: "Some people are so good that nothing a leader can do will make them better. Others are so incorrigible that nothing can be done to improve them. But the great bulk of folk go with the moral tide of the moment. The leader must help create that tide!" As church leaders, administrators, and formators, we carry a large role in reshaping the face of the earth!

## Educational Resources

- [Activity for College Campus Communities](#) – Helps students explore the sin of racism through Scripture, Church teaching, and personal reflection, fostering a deeper commitment to justice and unity on campus.
- [Responding to the Sin of Racism Resources](#) – This packet, which includes bulletin text, handouts, and memes, was compiled by various offices of the USCCB.
- [Study Guide - Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love](#) – All who seek to open wide their hearts through prayerful engagement with this letter are invited to pray, listen, study, reflect, and respond. This study guide and the resources within are designed to complement the pastoral letter and will aid in grasping the spirit and intent of the letter.
- [Examining Our Subconscious Perceptions | en Español](#) – This resource is designed to illustrate how subconscious thoughts are often based on words, people, or objects that we commonly associate with each other. In Open Wide Our Hearts, the bishops write that these often unconscious biases contribute to a failure to value each person's dignity.
- [Racial Justice Resources](#) – The racism page of the USCCB Secretariat of Justice and Peace includes many helpful resources on this topic.
- [Rebuilding the Bridge: 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Movement](#) – The U.S. recently celebrated the 50th anniversaries of several important civil rights milestones. To commemorate these important events and the contributions of many Catholics to the civil rights movement, the Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church and office of African American Affairs, in collaboration with several other organizations, has launched Rebuilding the Bridge: African American Affairs' 50th Anniversary Initiative.
- [The Racial Divide in the United States](#) – Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton, Ph.D., S.T.D., Bishop Emeritus of Belleville (Illinois) shares his thoughts on racism in his pastoral letter and study guide, The Racial Divide in the United States: A Reflection for the World Day of Peace 2015.
- [Letter from Birmingham Jail Study Guide](#) – In recognition of the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Letter from Birmingham Jail, Christian Churches Together, one of the largest ecumenical organizations in the U.S., offered a response and created a Study Guide to facilitate reflection either for groups or individuals. The webpage for this important document also has an additional introduction for Catholics to the Study Guide and an introductory letter from Bishop Denis Madden and Bishop Daniel Flores.



United States  
Conference of  
Catholic Bishops

Learn More about the Subcommittee for the  
Promotion of Racial Justice and Reconciliation

