



Heart of Santa Maria on display
Protest on Main Street, Santa Maria, CA

CPF Bulletin Winter 2025

**St. Malachy Parishioners begin organizing to
Protect Immigrants** - update to follow soon

St. Malachy Anti-Racism Committee Advent 2024 Book Club

St. Malachy Anti-Racism Committee sponsored for a second Advent season reading of the book: "The Spiritual Work of Racial Justice" - A month of Meditations with Ignatius Loyola" by Patrick Saint - Jean, S.J. - page 6

Link to CatholicPhilly.com for St. Malachy and its Anti-racism Committee hosting New Encounters June 1, 2024, in St. Malachy Parish Hall. <https://catholicphilly.com/2024/06/commentaries/new-encounters-ministry-helps-parishes-respond-to-archbishops-pastoral-letter-on-racism/>

ICE at Ground Zero in Santa Maria

by Scott Fina, *This article was published in Santa Maria Times and also in the Lompoc Record and Santa Ynez Valley News of CA; Scott is a longtime CPF newsletter contributor.*

https://santamariatimes.com/opinion/commentary/ice-at-ground-zero-in-santa-maria-guest-commentary/article_ccefe406-d9ce-11ef-afbe-173ad2832428.html

While many residents of the Santa Maria Valley welcome the return of Donald Trump to the White House, there is a vulnerable group of the valley's residents that fears it. These concerned residents are among the hardest working and most giving. They are immigrants, many of whom are undocumented.

Many undocumented residents labor in our farm fields, and work in construction, healthcare, hospitality, and create their own businesses, to name just a few of their services. Our regional economy and commerce would collapse without them.

But unjustly, these residents have been misrepresented.

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The heart of Santa Maria was on display Monday

by Scott Fina, *This article was published in Santa Maria Times, the Lompoc Record and Santa Ynez Valley News:*

https://santamariatimes.com/opinion/commentary/the-heart-of-santa-maria-was-on-display-monday-guest-commentary/article_ff5e4d3c-e3fc-11ef-b1dc-63494f97dec8.html

On Monday of this week, Dennis Apel and I protested against ICE and the threatening mass deportations promised by President Trump, at the intersection of Broadway and Main Street in Santa Maria. Dennis is a member of a "Catholic Worker" community who has served immigrant farmworker families for several decades, helping them with housing, medical care, and food. I've assisted Dennis at times with his work.

The intersection at Broadway and Main is quite busy, especially late afternoon and early evening when Dennis and I stood there, each holding a sign. Mine read, "ICE have mercy." Dennis's read, "ICE let us be."

We were two old white guys attempting to support and be in solidarity with the immigrant community that in so many ways, has also been supportive of folks like us and other relatively privileged residents. We were surprised when many drivers passing by honked their horns, and others gave us a thumbs-up, or made other positive gestures, all in support of what we were doing.

An individual approached and asked if he could take pictures and video of us. We agreed. We intended to stay about an hour.

We were unaware that this person was posting the pictures and video on Facebook and other social media. He apparently had a very large number of contacts, because approximately 20 minutes later, a few people came and joined us in our protest. The group grew over the next 90 minutes or so, and reached what we estimated to be about 400 in number.

The assembly included many families, some with young children and a few with babies, and even some pets. There were also many youth and young men. Dennis and I were the only white folks. We were warmly welcomed to be a part of the protest. Some of the folks recognized us from the Facebook pictures.

Eventually all four corners of the intersection held many people. There were numerous protest signs, and flags representing several Latin American countries. There was also cheering and dancing. Two young men brought trumpets to play. At times, around 60 to 80 people marched from corner to corner of the intersection as the traffic light changed. Soon, nearly every vehicle passing by gave a honk in support, some also carried flags. The protest was amazingly animated, yet very respectful and orderly.

Typically, protests like this are planned, promoted, and sponsored by collaborating nonprofit organizations. I know that a number of such organizations are currently reaching out to immigrants and informing them of their rights when interacting with ICE. Several organizations have also established a rapid response network and hotline to track ICE activities as a warning system for vulnerable immigrant residents.

But these organizations weren't behind the protest in Santa Maria at Broadway and Main Street on Monday. This gathering was most certainly unplanned and spontaneous.

Dennis and I were unaware that this day was recognized as, "A Day Without Immigrants" until one of the folks at the gathering informed us about it. The slogan refers to the essential role immigrants play in our society—and especially in places like Santa Maria where the regional economy would crumble without them—including the large number of undocumented residents we have in the Santa Maria Valley.

One could think of the busy intersection at Broadway and Main Street as the geographical, administrative, and commercial heart of Santa Maria. The gathering and protest of our immigrant residents on the afternoon and evening of Monday, "A Day Without Immigrants," however, pointed to a different kind of heart.

The immigrant residents who were protesting ICE on Monday at Broadway and Main had valid reasons to fear the potential impact of deportation on their families. The need to protest was

reasonable and well founded. But the people participating in the protest also exhibited pride, community, dignity, courage, generosity, faith, and hope.

And two old white guys left it several hours later, having felt deeply embraced, encouraged, and inspired.

ICE at Ground Zero in Santa Maria *continued from page 1*

In his second inaugural address, President Trump vowed to “begin the process of returning millions and millions of criminal aliens back to the places from which they came.”

(<https://www.whitehouse.gov/remarks/2025/01/the-inaugural-address/>) In other words, the president is commencing with mass deportations.

Indeed, Trump has demonized undocumented immigrants, broadly referring to them as dangerous and violent. This claim has been one of his most powerful political leverages. He is wrong.

Numerous studies from reputable organizations have found that undocumented immigrants are much less likely to commit crime than people born in the U.S. For example, the Institute for Public Policy at Northwestern University determined that undocumented immigrants are 60% less likely to be incarcerated than U.S. born Americans.

(<https://news.northwestern.edu/stories/2024/03/immigrants-are-significantly-less-likely-to-commit-crimes-than-the-us-born/>)

Also on inaugural day, Trump signed several executive orders expanding detention and deportation of undocumented immigrants. One, “Protecting the American People Against Invasion,” revokes Executive Order 13993 signed by Joe Biden in 2021.

(<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/protecting-the-american-people-against-invasion/>)

Biden’s executive order prioritized detention and deportation of undocumented aliens who presented a public security risk, and deprioritized those that didn’t. Thus, Trump’s policy is less focused on undocumented immigrants who are likely to harm Americans than Biden’s. One asks, in this regard, which president has been most concerned about crime and the safety of Americans?

Trump has also depicted undocumented immigrants as avoiding work, abusing social services, and weighing down the economy. He’s wrong, again.

Numerous studies from reputable organizations have found that undocumented residents have contributed immensely to our national, state and local economies. Moreover, they pay taxes that support such programs as Social Security and Medicare which they cannot benefit from.

Consider findings by the Institute Taxation and Economic Policy showing the net gain American society enjoys from the work of undocumented immigrants. According to the study, “Undocumented immigrants paid federal, state, and local taxes of \$8,889 per person in 2022. In other words, for every 1 million undocumented immigrants who reside in the country, public services receive \$8.9 billion in additional tax revenue.”

(<https://itep.org/undocumented-immigrants-taxes-2024/>)

Trump has also claimed that undocumented immigrants are stealing Americans' jobs.

(<https://www.c-span.org/clip/campaign-2024/trump-on-illegal-immigrants-theyre-taking-your-jobs/5133406>)

There's local evidence that counters that allegation.

In 2016, Bonipak Produce Inc. and Adam Brothers Family Farm, long established and large agricultural businesses in the Santa Maria Valley, were forced to fire a majority of their workers because Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Worksite Inspections found them to be undocumented. This occurred while there was already a 25% farmworker shortage causing substantial fiscal losses from crops left in fields.

(https://santamariatimes.com/news/local/hundreds-of-farmworkers-laid-off/article_e33c7293-5a3a-52cc-966e-b08248f87f24.html)

Did this not amount to a federal assault on the economy of the Santa Maria Valley?

It's the other arm of ICE, the Enforcement Removal Operations (ERO), however, that created one of the greatest controversies in Santa Maria. Here I refer to the construction of the ICE deportation processing facility in the city (during 2014-2015).

ICE ERO had been seeking a strategic location for its office to carry out arrests and deportations of undocumented residents in Santa Barbara County. Eventually the federal government settled on a site on West Century Street in Santa Maria. It was owned by a well-known (now deceased) developer who served on the city's planning commission. The developer helped with the application process for a zoning change and permit for the design and construction of the new ICE facility.

An uproar resulted among city residents, mostly immigrants, who feared that the proximity of the ICE facility would lead to more deportations. That fear was somewhat exaggerated at the time. Given the current mass deportation plans of President Trump, that fear is likely well founded now.

The controversy over the permitting of the ICE facility found its way to the Santa Maria City Council, which had final authority on the matter. I was one of the four parties that filed and argued appeals against the permitting of the facility with City Council. I recall presenting my appeal while standing among 1,500 residents—almost entirely immigrants, including many families, inside the city's convention center at its fairgrounds. The hearing had been moved to this site to accommodate the large number of attendees. They packed the facility; hundreds more demonstrated outside.

Besides the four appeals, numerous residents made public comments—some desperate--nearly all against the permitting of the ICE facility.

Despite all this, City Council voted 3-2 in support of the facility. Only one member of the current city council was also on the council at the time: Alice Patino, who was then mayor and continues to be so. Mayor Patino voted against the permitting of the facility.

The ICE facility has been operating quietly for several years now, after some initial protests. The circumstances have changed, however, under re-elected President Trump. Santa Maria is at ground zero for the deportation of immigrants.

For the sake of the city and its surrounding valley, protests on West Century Street need to resume and do so in greater numbers.

Public and nonprofit organizations in the region—including schools and churches--must find ways to protect and assist immigrant families that may be impacted by deportation.

The current Santa Maria City Council should also take action. It will require compassion and courage to do so.

Trump’s executive order empowers certain local and state law enforcement officers to arrest and detain people on the basis of their immigration status. (See Section 11.) The order also threatens “Sanctuary Jurisdictions” with denying their federal funding. (See Section 17.) City Council must stand-up to these challenges. Council must assure that local law enforcement remains fully disconnected from ICE ERO operations. And it should push back by passing an ordinance that does indeed make Santa Maria a sanctuary city.

A Pope’s Prayer For Immigrants - Pope Francis

Merciful God, we pray to you for all the men, women and children who have died after leaving their homelands in search of a better life.

Though many of their graves bear no name, to you each one is known, loved and cherished.

May we never forget them, but honor their sacrifice with deeds more than words. We entrust to you all those who have made this journey, enduring fear, uncertainty and humiliation, in order to reach a place of safety and hope.

Just as you never abandoned your Son as he was brought to a safe place by Mary and Joseph, so now be close to these, your sons and daughters, through our tenderness and protection.

In caring for them may we seek a world where none are forced to leave their home and where all can live in freedom, dignity and peace.

Merciful God and Father of all, wake us from the slumber of indifference, open our eyes to their suffering, and free us from the insensitivity born of worldly comfort and self-centeredness.

Inspire us, as nations, communities and individuals, to see that those who come to our shores are our brothers and sisters.

May we share with them the blessings we have received from your hand, and recognize that together, as one human family, we are all migrants, journeying in hope to you, our true home, where every tear will be wiped away, where we will be at peace and safe in your embrace.

APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION
LAUDATE DEUM
Of the Holy Father Francis
To all people of good will on the climate crisis
October 4, 2023

SINCE THE PUBLICATION OF LAUDATO SI' IN 2015...

- We have not reacted strongly enough to the climate crisis (cf. LD 2).
- The world that welcomes us is crumbling (cf. LD 2).
- We see how the impact of climate change will harm the lives and families of many people (cf. LD 2).

THE SIGNS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ARE:

- Extreme phenomena, unusual heat, droughts (cf. LD 5).
- Heavy rainfall, floods (cf. LD 5).
- Unusual acceleration of warming (cf. LD 6).
- Acceleration of the increase of greenhouse gases (cf. LD 11).

HOW DID WE GET TO THIS POINT?

Neither the human causes of climate change (cf. LD 11) nor its position in the technocratic paradigm can be doubted.

The human being believes himself to be limitless, "whose capacities and possibilities could be expanded to infinity thanks to technology" (cf. LD 21).

We believe that the world around us is an object of exploitation, of unbridled use, of unlimited ambition (cf. LD 25).

LACK OF EFFICIENCY, OPPORTUNITIES, AND LASTING PROGRESS IN MULTILATERAL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN STATES (cf. LD 34).

There are no organizations with real authority to ensure non-negotiable objectives (cf. LD 35).

Previous effective decision-making procedures were not sufficient (cf. LD 43).

Prior Climate Conferences have had a low level of implementation (personal interests are privileged over the common good) (cf. LD 52).

What is the point of preserving a power that will be remembered for its inability to intervene (cf. LD 60)?

“ ”
The whole of the universe shows the inextinguishable richness of God (cf. LD 63). Let us join this path of reconciliation with the world that shelters us (cf. LD 69).
"There are no cultural changes without changes in people" (cf. LD 70).
"Praise God: a human being who pretends to take his place becomes the worst danger to himself" (cf. LD 73).

POPE FRANCIS

COP28 UAE
UN Dubai COP28
NOV 30, 2023 - DEC 12, 2023

- It should be a turning point to react and show that what has been done was worthwhile (cf. LD 54).
- It should help us to make a better energy transition (cf. LD 59).
- It should help us to get out of the logic of patchwork solutions in order to seek the common good and ensure the future of coming generations (cf. LD 58, 60).

DICASTERY FOR PROMOTING INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Contact the Laudato Si' Movement and the Laudato Si' Action Platform at info@humandevelopment.va

APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION LAUDATE DEUM OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS TO ALL PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20231004-laudate-deum.html

<https://www.mobilize.us/network/>

<https://www.mobilize.us/network/event/679889/>

St. Malachy Anti-Racism Committee

Advent 2024 Book Club

St. Malachy Anti-Racism Committee sponsored for a second Advent season reading of the book: "The Spiritual Work of Racial Justice - A month of Meditations with Ignatius Loyola" by Patrick Saint - Jean, S.J. Originally published: September 26, 2021.

This year, they continued with the same insightful book but revised the format to be more manageable by offering participants the option to choose and share on just one of the daily reflections for each week.

The sessions were held on Thursdays at 7:00 pm on Zoom December 5, 12, and 19, with the final session in person after Mass during the parish first Sunday Hospitality on January 5, 2025. The following are excerpts from the third week and final session:

Week 3, Day 5: The Power of Compassion: Active Participation in the Sorrow of Oppression - December 19 Session - Ava shared on the Theme of Compassion:

"Compassion involves three essential components: an intellectual understanding that suffering is real, an emotional response to suffering, and taking action to alleviate the pain. We are challenged to go beyond merely recognizing and feeling the suffering of others; we must also act to alleviate it.

Systemic racism has profound effects on our society. The impact of systemic racism can be felt when our sisters are denied adequate healthcare, our brothers can face legal troubles simply for driving while Black, and children can be separated from their parents at the border. It is convenient to deny these realities, but we must acknowledge that they are our problems too.

In the story of the Good Samaritan, the wounded traveler lay on the ground and so good people were able to avoid the problem by passing on the other side and continuing with their daily activities. Sometimes, we do not come to compassion easily when our brains perceive the persons affected as being outside "our own tribe".

The Samaritan went beyond his "tribe" to help the man on the ground, showing sacrificial love by spending his time and money. This "womb love" is the kind of compassion we are called to embody.

Are we as Body of Christ be prepared to be people of compassion, to confront the problem of systemic racism instead of passing on the other side?"

Week 4, Day 3: Resurrection Power: Overcoming a Culture of Death - Final Session - Robert shared:

"Right away, the subtitle grabs me: Overcoming a Culture of Death. The late Pope, St. John, Paul II talked about a culture of death, and it took me a bit of time and living and observing life to understand what he meant. We live in a world that promotes the devaluing of human life due to nationalism, racism, sexism, and unjust economic systems. Racism is structural in the United States. It is in law enforcement, the justice system, laissez-faire capitalism and education. Mick Maloney, the Irish musician who used to produce our annual Irish concert, joked drolly that the winners write the history, and the losers write the songs. In Florida, it's illegal to teach black history.

Minorities, especially unarmed minorities, are far more likely to be shot by law-enforcement... Minorities are usually presumed guilty by virtue of their ethnicity. To overcome this culture of

death one needs resurrection power. One can know Christ more intimately through the suffering of his or her fellows. The resurrection does not erase the crucifixion, but it offers hope.

Where do we see resurrection? We see it in the end of slavery and sharecropping, in the rise of the civil rights movement as a reaction to Jim Crow. Resurrection is Hope. The bones of our ancestors cry out from the ground for justice. We must provide it.”

Week 4, Day 7: The Unfinished Story of Jesus’ Ascension - Final Session - Adaobi shared:

“In Day 7 reading, Patrick Saint-Jean talks about the ascension as he delivers a message of hope. I focused on the reflection exercises at the end of the reading. In this exercise, he asks us to put ourselves in the shoes of the disciples as they witnessed Christ’s ascension to heaven and note how we feel.

I, and the disciples by extension, would have felt so hopeless. This was a friend they had come to live with and loved over the past three years. In fact, they relied on him for everything. They sat at his feet learning. Peter, had not too long ago, attempted to walk on water and failed at it miserably. They [the disciples] did not know how to work any miracles yet; they were just followers. Peter had denied him, Judas had betrayed him, they spent their days comparing who would be the greatest among them, and doubting that sick people would be healed or hungry people fed. And suddenly, Jesus, their friend was dying, and they could do nothing about it. All hope was lost. But he resurrected, and here they were witnessing his final departure from their presence. I can feel the fear, the uncertainty, the uneasiness, and once again the hopelessness, even as he promises that he will send them a comforter.

I couldn’t help but draw a parallel with where we are today. When Patrick Saint-Jean wrote this book, we were witnessing an emboldening of anti-Black racism that culminated in the killing of George Floyd. Now, his case was, sadly, not the first (or last) on slot on a Black life in this society. However, it was a moment when we were all grappling with the same fundamental reality of the COVID-19 pandemic which forced us all to pause, and to face our blindness. Ironically, we may be entering a similar political season where we may no longer be free to have these conversations. There is anxiety stemming from the anticipation that we, especially those invested in the work of anti-racism and social justice, will lose any gains made so far in this movement. There is fear, uncertainty, uneasiness, and likely hopelessness especially as marginalized populations may bear the bigger brunt of, once again, enduring a hostile climate that threatens their humanity.

However, the message of the ascension gives us hope that even in the face of these uncertainties, we are no longer the same people. We are no longer chained by our blindness to others’ suffering. We also know that there are others (even within the church community) who committed to tackling the sin of racism. We are awake now. We should find strength in our communities, relying on each other for support as we navigate whatever lies ahead.

Come Holy Spirit and fill the heart of the faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love!”

“The Spiritual Work of Racial Justice” - author: <https://www.creighton.edu/campus-directory/patrick-saint-jean>

Patrick Saint-Jean offers a guide for all who desire to be more deeply impacted by Spiritual Exercises-- which are meant to help us encounter Jesus, grow closer to Jesus, and follow Jesus, not to wallow in our own sins or focus on the ways we have failed Jesus. ... https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Spiritual_Work_of_Racial_Justice.html?id=lmGXzgEACAAJ&source=kp_book_description

Invitation to “Spiritual Work of Racial Justice” Book Discussion Groups with Patrick Saint-Jean, SJ

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aT9pFgne-MA>

Join us for Hospitality May 18

St. Malachy Hall after 10 am Mass and celebrate Fr. Mac and CPFNL.

St. Malachy parish council is planning to start third Sunday hospitality. Like on the first Sundays, parishioners and guests are invited to a light hospitality after the Sunday mass in the former school hall. Hospitality is typically sponsored by one or two parish groups. On May 18, 2025, CPF will again cosponsor hospitality with two other groups, Jesu Caritas and Christian Meditation which like CPF have had Fr. McNamee as a long-time member. These three groups are not specifically parish groups, however many of us are also members of two parish groups who will also join us in this effort: St. Malachy Antiracism Committee and the Property and Building Committee. The occasion will be another chance for members of each of these five groups to socialize with parishioners and guests as well as inform others of our missions. We hope CPF supporters and CPF newsletter subscribers can join us on May 18, 2025.

If you are interested in learning more about any of these groups sooner; please feel free to email us at CPFphila@gmail.com and please put the name of the group in the subject line. Briefly:

1. Jesu Caritas was initiated at St Malachy by a group of parishioners joining Fr. MacNamee and the late Sr. Cecile on a one-day retreat in Brooklyn with other Jesu Caritas groups, many decades ago. The group meets online using the same link as CPF at 9 am on the second Saturday of the month. For more information, please reach out to Pat Smyth or Lois Harris after the Sunday mass; <https://jesuscaritasusa.org/>.
2. Christian Meditation grew out of Jesu Caritas and was a special project of Sr. Cecile. Mike Gracia became the group's anchor after Sr. Cecile's health required her retirement as parish administrator. For over a decade Mike faithfully gathered us every Tuesday evening at 6:30 for a reflection and 20 minutes of silent meditation until his death in 2023. Please reach out to Lois Harris; <https://meditationtalks.wccm.org/>
<https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2021/04/28/pope-francis-general-audience-prayer-meditation-jesus-240547>
3. Property and Building Committee is newly forming group to assist the pastor for in identifying and addressing concerns of the parish properties and buildings. If you have a skill set or an interest in this regard, please reach out to Ralph or Francesco after the Sunday mass.
4. St. Malachy Antiracism Committee was formed to respond to the mandate of "Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love - A Pastoral Letter Against Racism." Please see Adaobi, Angie, Ava, Maria, or Naomi after mass; <https://www.newencounters.org/>
<https://www.usccb.org/resources/open-wide-our-hearts-enduring-call-love-pastoral-letter-against-racism> newencounterscatholics@gmail.com.
<https://catholicphilly.com/2024/06/commentaries/new-encounters-ministry-helps-parishes-respond-to-archbishops-pastoral-letter-on-racism/>
5. CPF Phila began as a Catholic response to the Vietnam war with Fr. MacNamee and Sr. Cecile Reiley as early members; <https://www.cpfphila.com/>
<https://www.cpfphila.com/ARTICLES/Sr.%20Cecile%20Reiley,%20Still%20With%20Us%20All%20These%20Years.html>

The May 18 gathering will also be a place for all of us who participated in CPF newsletter with our subscribers to commemorate the many years of the newsletter's existence.

NEWS FLASH: Br. Richard Withers to be ordained a priest at the Cathedral on May 17, 2025.

CPF newsletter included the following in the context of recent actions to dismantle D.E.I. programs and other racist actions taking by the present US administration.

Exposing Our Country's Caste System

by Frank McGinty – *long time and now deceased member of the Catholic Peace Fellowship; his article was originally published in the January 2021 edition of the CPF newsletter:*

https://www.cpfphila.com/ARTICLES/2021%20january%20pdf/jan_2021_pdf_final.pdf

“Caste is insidious and therefore powerful because it is not hatred; it is not necessarily personal. It is the worn grooves of routine and unthinking expectation, patterns of a social order that have been in place for so long that it looks like the natural order of things.”

Isabel Wilkerson, author of *Caste, The Origins of Our Discontent*.

While working in its Chicago office as a national correspondent for the New York Times several years ago, Isabel Wilkerson arranged by phone for an interview with a prominent businessman. When she arrived at the appointed hour, the mogul refused to meet with her.

He was unable to believe that a Times correspondent would be a woman of color.

A white man who had recently moved into a wealthy Midwestern suburb noticed a Black woman coming to his front door. He immediately gathered clothing items for the dry cleaner—presuming that the visitor, the wife of a prominent cardiologist coming to introduce herself as his next-door neighbor and to welcome him to the development, was an employee of a dry cleaner’s shop that was advertising a discount. When the first Black person moved into our co-op apartment, she met her neighbor who asked “Whose aide are you?” In the deep South, a mother used Brillo to scrub the hands of her daughter who had touched the hands of a Black child, “to eliminate the germs.” A dominant-caste man raised in the Depression-era South had been taught the rules of the caste system and adhered to them as expected. When he went north in the mid-twentieth century and joined the military, he had to confront the mythologies of his upbringing. Up north on occasion, he found himself in situations where black people were permitted in the same work settings as the whites. “I thought I was entirely prepared emotionally and intellectually,” the man, an editor of *Look* magazine, recalled years later. But he discovered that he was a captive of his own conditioning, which he called a certain madness. “Each time I shook hands with a Negro,” he said, “I felt an urge to wash my hands. Every rational impulse, all that I considered best in myself struggled against this urge. But the hand that had touched the dark skin had a will of its own and would not be dissuaded from signaling it was unclean. That is what I mean by madness.” Four of these incidents are among the many related in *Caste-The Origins of Our Discontent*, by Isabel Wilkerson, who researched caste systems of India, Nazi Germany, and the U.S. The New York Times calls the book “an instant classic and almost certainly the keynote non-fiction book of the American century so far.” *Caste*, Wilkerson writes, is social classification characterized by an automatic hierarchy placing whites as dominant and people of color as subordinate. *Caste* explores the structure of an unspoken system of human ranking and reveals how our lives are still restricted by what divided us centuries ago. “Modern-day caste protocols,” Wilkerson writes, “are often less about overt attacks or conscious hostility. They are like the wind, powerful enough to knock you down but invisible as they go about their work.” Wilkerson asserts that the social constructs of race and caste are not synonymous, but that they “can and

do coexist in the same culture and serve to reinforce each other. Race, in the United States, is the visible agent of the unseen force of caste. Caste is the bones, race the skin. Caste is the usher walking down the aisle in a darkened theater, flashlight in hand, to direct a person to their proper seat for a performance.” Wilkerson’s caste system is essentially two-tiered—dominant or white and subordinate or non-white. Caste and race continually blend into each other. Wilkerson defines a racist as someone who harms, mocks, or institutionalizes inferiority on the basis of race. A casteist is someone who upholds or benefits from an ingrained system of hierarchy, never challenging its assumptions. Caste is an insidious force that speaks outside of hate and intolerance; it is animated by practice and reflexes. It is not just the far right or triggerhappy cops; even the “good” can be casteists, such as the guest at a Tina Brown book party who asked the then Illinois state senator, Barack Obama, to fetch drinks. Caste, says Wilkerson, is the granting or withholding of respect, status, honor, attention, privilege, resources, benefit of the doubt, and human kindness to someone on the basis of their perceived rank or standing in the hierarchy. Caste pushes back against an African American woman who, without humor or apology, takes a seat at the head of the table speaking Russian. It sees as logical a sixteen year-old white teenager as store manager over employees from the subordinate caste three times his age. Thus a slight exposure to Isabel Wilkerson’s explanation of the caste system in the U.S.--a COVID-like virus infecting us all.

CPF 2025 Schedule of Meetings and Activities

On January 12 and February 9 CPFphila had our typical hybrid (in person/on zoom) second Sunday meeting after the 10 am Sunday Mass at St. Malachy, 1429 N 11th St. Phila. PA.

The following reflects decisions made, goals and hopes for the coming months of 2025:

The March 9, April 13 and May 11 meeting will be at 12 noon on zoom only at the following link:

JOHN D MCGINTY is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting. Topic: CPF Meeting - All Online (mcginty.jack.j@gmail.com)

Time: Mar 9, 2025 11:45 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada) Every month on the Second Sun, until May 11, 2025, 3 occurrence(s) Monthly:

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/95329586847?pwd=Ogjynpj17CL3sDzWQy48AourFcrCyz.1>

Meeting ID: 953 2958 6847

Passcode: 950925

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,95329586847#,,,,*950925# US (Chicago)

+16469313860,,95329586847#,,,,*950925# US

The typical hybrid (in person/ on zoom) second Sunday meetings will resume at 11:30 am on June 8 and July 13 however for August 10 we are planning a brief prayerful remembrance of Hiroshima and Nagasaki along with commemoration Franz and Franziska to immediately follow the 10 Mass in the St Malachy church which will also be available on the typical zoom link.

Typical Join Zoom Meeting Link to be used for 2nd Sundays from June to the end of the year:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81605561453?pwd=KrkuNCbymCwRheW96ChOHldxHINTXK.1>

HOLD THE DATE OF SATURDAY MORNING APRIL 12, 2025

FOR ANOTHER CO-SPONSORED RETREAT- MORE INFO TO FOLLOW

ANNUAL GOOD FRIDAY WAY OF THE CROSS - APRIL 18, 2025