

RACISM-a Catholic response!

The issue of *racism* is very much in our world news at the moment that has been triggered by the recent tragic death of the American man Mr. George Floyd.

Pope Francis in one of his insightful reflections clarified this issue so well in these words; “*We cannot tolerate or ever turn a blind eye to racism of any kind as essentially it abuses the sacredness of human life.*”

There are 2 great Catholic role models who were truly inspirational in how they challenged the reality of racism in their own particular life journey. The first was *St Martin de Porres (1579-1639)*, he was born of mixed colour in Lima, Peru. Martin was canonized a saint of the Church in 1961 by Pope John XXIII. The Church as well as the government of that time in their governance were both strongly racist. This was an issue that Martin courageously challenged and in doing so pressured the government and the Church in Peru to publicly change their stance. The second great role model was *St Katherine Drexel (1858-1955)* she was a Religious nun from the USA who courageously and effectively fought for the dignity and the rights of many American Indian people and African American people. Katherine was canonized in 2000 BY Pope John Paul II.

Racism is definitely not a modern reality it has probably been around since the beginning of time, yet it still needs to be named and when necessary challenged! *Fr Martin R Maunsell*