

Some Are Still Not Welcome As a Black woman and a Catholic convert, the Lord's words in today's first reading -- "You were once aliens [and slaves] yourselves in the land of Egypt" -- speak strongly to me. Through Moses the Lord was commanding his people not to molest or oppress the stranger, the widow, the orphan. The Israelites got it. They themselves had experienced in Egypt what it means to be an outsider. This charge is foundational Catholic social justice teaching. See, e.g., https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html; [Catholic Social Ethics: The Antidote to Ideology | Word on Fire](#)

Today's second and third readings (1 *Thes.* 1: 5c-10; and *Mt.* 22: 34-40) are in accord. The second directs us to imitate Paul -- and, in turn, Christ -- in telling the Good News (expressed in our Church's social justice principles). The Gospel proposes the Golden Rule: Love God and love your neighbor, i.e., all humanity, as yourself.

So then, we are to show generosity, compassion and welcome to the alien, the archetypal outsider.

This is a hard teaching, even for Catholic Christians committed to social justice. It seems that as the human family begins to welcome a current outsider, it inevitably begins to exclude a new one.

A few examples.

- **People of Color** We people of darker skin hue are easy to identify and easy to target as "other" and have remained aliens for generations.
- **The Unborn** Today the "inconvenient" unborn, those sheltered but unseen in the womb, are marked, even celebrated, as legally expendable beings. While the carnage of abortion persists in our country (with Illinois tragically claiming to be "a Midwestern Haven" for the procedure), some sincere Catholic social justice advocates hesitate to speak publicly against abortion because "it's too controversial". Controversial in whose view? Not that of Pope Francis or Pope Benedict XVI or Pope Saint John Paul II the Great or unchanging Catholic Tradition from as far back as the first century *Didache*. Catholic social justice unflinchingly mandates that we protect the unborn. Period. Hard Stop. How ironic that some who without hesitation tout "Black Lives Matter" shy away (for fear of not appearing "with" contemporary culture?) from openly saying "Unborn Black Lives Matter Too".
- **Other Neighbors** Modern outsiders also include the elderly, those with Downs Syndrome, the very sick and infirm, the homeless, the immigrant. Why do we not see them as neighbors? Why do they not have a right to life? Are they not as much God's children.

My point is that we Catholics need to step up our game. We need to convey, in action *and* proclamation, that all are welcome, *all life is sacred*, no one is an outsider or alien. Our Creator loves . . . *all of us*.

