

11 June 2020

Memorial of Saint Barnabas, Apostle

Dear Friends,

In my homily last Sunday, I preached about a talk I attended three years ago at Seattle University, given by Bishop Edward Braxton of the Diocese of Belleville, Illinois. He titled his talk: *The Horizons of Possibilities: The Catholic Church and the Racial Divide in the United States: Old Wounds Reopened*. You can watch a recording of his talk at:

[www.seattleu.edu/ictc/events/catholic-heritage-lectures/past-speakers/2017-18/](http://www.seattleu.edu/ictc/events/catholic-heritage-lectures/past-speakers/2017-18/)

Bishop Braxton's intention with his talk was to give us awareness of how this issue has existed—and continues to exist—in our Church, with the ultimate goal of encouraging us to “expand our horizons.” That is, to help us recognize that we *can* make different choices and actions now—both personally and as a Church. That we *can* expand the horizons of our heart and of our world, so as to more and more include Jesus Christ's commandment to love one another (Matthew 22:39).

Bishop Braxton advised that there are five steps for each of us to undertake as we seek to expand our horizons: listen to others (especially those we disagree with); learn from other people's experiences; think about what we hear and learn; pray about these things with God; act in ways that include Jesus Christ's commandment to love one another. When we continually do these five things, we get better and better at expanding our horizons.

Bishop Braxton stated it in this way: “As Catholics, therefore, as Christians, therefore...always nurture choices, decision, beliefs, and experiences that are faithful to Christ's law of love, which gives us an ever-expanding horizon of possibilities.”

Finally, an important way that we can listen, learn, think, pray, and act on this topic would be to read the 2018 U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter Against Racism titled, *Open Wide Our Hearts* (available for free in both English and Spanish). Let's discern how we are being called to implement this document into our lives as individuals and as a parish:

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/upload/open-wide-our-hearts.pdf>

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/upload/open-wide-our-hearts-spanish.pdf>

Mary, Queen of Peace, pray for us!

