

Compassion

Faith doing justice in the Central and Southern Province...and beyond

September 2019

Jesuit Slaveholding “Curriculum Project”

The Slavery, History, Memory and Reconciliation (SHMR) Project, a joint project of the UCS Province and Saint Louis University, was established in 2016 to research the lived experiences of the men, women and children enslaved by Jesuits in the 19th century, in order to know, and to share, a more complete history of Jesuit involvement in the institution of slavery. The team working on the project has identified nearly 200 enslaved individuals, whose unfree labor helped establish and sustain Jesuit missions and colleges in Missouri, Kentucky, Kansas, Illinois, Louisiana and Alabama, and is now tracing the lives of the enslaved and their descendants. You can learn more about the project at SHMR.Jesuits.org.

In early August, a committee of teachers and staff from Rockhurst High School in Kansas City, Mo., De Smet Jesuit High School in St. Louis, St. Louis University High School,

and Regis Jesuit High School in Denver met with the staff of the SHMR Project and the UCS Province to begin looking at how the information from the SHMR Project can be shared with high school students, faculty, staff and administrators. It is hoped that a curriculum could be developed to serve as a launching point for discussions about the legacy of slaveholding and racial justice at the schools. Several work groups are now working on resources that can be used by schools and parishes including visual aids, faculty presentations, and Black History Month Initiatives. Contact Laura Weis, SHMR-ProjectCoordinator@jesuits.org or Mary Baudouin, mbaudouin@jesuits.org if you are interested in serving on one of the work groups – and watch for more information and resources to come!



St. Louis University High School Connects with SHMR Project in Unique Way

Inspired by the work of the SHMR Curriculum Project, committee member Frank Kovarik, the director of equity and inclusion at St. Louis University High School, put together a photo display that celebrates the accomplishments of alumni of color along with the following essay that explains the SHMR Project findings and acknowledges SLUH’s institutional history of racial injustice, beginning with slavery. That display includes photos and description of alumni of color who “personify SLUH’s mission ... and

who paved the way of color for other alumni of color from diverse backgrounds.”

Like the history of our country, the history of St. Louis University High School is marked by the sin of racism but also the courage and achievement of Black people and other people of color. We remember those were enslaved by Bishop DuBourg when he founded the school in 1818. We remember the six enslaved people who, against their will, made the treacherous journey from Maryland to St. Louis along with the group of Jesuits who would eventually assume responsibility for St. Louis University. We remember the scores of other people whose unfree labor added to the growing university's wealth and prosperity. We remember the pioneering Black students who, starting in 1946, first availed themselves of the opportunity to attend this high school from which they would have previously been barred because of their race. And we honor the unique courage of Black, Latino, Asian, Arab and other students of color who attend this predominately White institution today.

As a Catholic, Jesuit school, our mission is grounded in the Gospel imperative to treat every human being with love and respect, aware that we are all made in the image of God. We strive to build the Kingdom of God, in which, as Paul wrote to the Galatians, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

We recognize that our institution has not fully lived out this essential part of our mission, in our thoughts and words, in what we have done and what we have failed to do. We are committed to search for ways of repairing the damage done by the sin history of our school, our church, our city, state, and nation. Ultimately, we seek to create lasting and positive change at SLUH by cultivating an environment of involvement, respect, and connection – where a richness of ideas, backgrounds and perspectives is harnessed to create lasting value for all in our community.

Solidarity with El Paso and Mississippi

Dr. Sue Weishar of the Jesuit Social Research Institute in New Orleans writes about two tragic incidents that have happened in our province in the last month ...

A young man burning with hatred for immigrants and Hispanics massacred 22 people in a Walmart in El Paso with a weapon of war. Before the tears were dried from that atrocity, our government orchestrated a cruel and terrifying raid against poor immigrant workers struggling to feed their families in five towns in rural Mississippi. The grief and terror that our Latino sisters and brothers have experienced these past two weeks is immense. The actions of those who caused such misery defy reason. Those actions, fueled by fear and dehumanization, were met with the only thing that can counter such cruelty, love. The El Paso community has rallied around victims' families. A fund for the families of victims has been established by the El Paso Community Foundation. Donations can be made at the following link: <https://payments.epcf.org/victims>

Mississippi churches and nonprofits are working tirelessly to comfort families torn apart by the raids and provide emergency assistance and quality legal aid. Donations can be made to Catholic Charities Jackson <https://catholic-charitiesjackson.org/waystogive/august-7-ice-raids/>, which is leading the emergency aid response, and El Pueblo Legal Services <https://elpueblo-ms.org/donate/>, which is coordinating immigration legal assistance.

Please continue to include the families and communities impacted by the El Paso shooting and the Mississippi raids in your thoughts and prayers and work for justice.

Feast of St. Francis Celebration

Every October 4, the Feast of St. Francis celebrates the saint who saw all created beings as his brother or sister. Inspired by this example, Catholic Climate Covenant produces a free educational program to help faith communities and schools explore how they can better care for creation and the poor. This year's program, “We Are All Connected: Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor,” complements and accompanies the Vatican's Amazonian Synod and focuses on integral ecology, environmental and climate justice, and lifting the voice of indigenous communities. The program contains prayers, readings, a short video, and suggested activities.

Download the Feast of St. Francis Program