



THE VIA DOLOROSA TO ANTIRACISM

by Toni Moore-Duggan

Recently I found myself at the TV and the movie “Rosewood” was broadcasting. This movie was inspired by the 1923 Rosewood massacre in Florida when a white mob of bigots killed black people and destroyed their town. It hurt my heart so deeply to see the suffering of black people at the hands of bigots. I had to turn away. What bothers me most is their laughter and escapades while watching and engaging in another human being’s suffering. Not only were the surrounding adult bigots engaged but the intentional antics they used to enculturate their children was a space of sacred pause. They were teaching them hatred by way of promoting the false truth of white privilege. They intentionally wanted them to think people of color were less than themselves and they needed to learn techniques to actively promote their suffering. This was even more nauseating. In this particular Movie that was based in history was

about innocent people of color being accused of an egregious act that they did not do and how the accusation of the event unleashed a hate form them that was just waiting for an opportunity to explode into the lives of innocent people of color just trying to get through the day. There are many satan figures and many Jesus figures in this movie. It is a movie of sin, love, suffering, white privilege, hate unleashed, reconciliation and redemption. It is a scared space of Light and importance to witness the intentional primordial innocence of a child who refuses to engage in hatred and stands up and says, “No.” This child recognized the infinite dignity of each human being. This child understood and clung to the powerful force of the Holy Spirit stirring within him. The Force that moved him to reconcile the relationship of what he felt, what he believed, and what he must do. **(continued on next page)**



ROSEWOOD

One woman's false claim to have been assaulted by a black man resulted in the formation of a lynch mob that headed for Rosewood with arson and murder on their minds. Before the week was over, blood was shed and the town was in ashes

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This is the Via Dolorosa of the road to Antiracism. We cannot afford to turn away in the face of so much violence and suffering of humanity. As Christian we are called to see and to walk the road with Jesus.

Karl Rahner writes in his work on the Spiritual Exercises,

"... Therefore, the ultimate reason why every man exists, by his life and existence with the Incarnate Word, he might make it possible for God to undertake the adventure of his love outside of himself. In order to achieve this God really needs humanity because finite man, (and this is what God himself became), is essentially related to other human "Thou." This means that all of humanity is concentrated around the Son of Man as its source of ultimate meaning. Humanity is "the fullness of Christ."(Rahner, 1965)

With profound reverence, the Via Dolorosa brings to light all those who actively participated and all those who stood on the side maybe feeling some kind of way, but doing nothing.

Our call before the altar as we stand in line to receive the Body and Blood of Christ is to become what we receive. At any given moment we are called to defend the hope that lies within us. We are called to amplify the Holy Spirit within us and pour out His being in our every breath.

God injected Grace into our being gratuitously, unconditionally and irrevocably. This truth should give us courage and embolden us to live justice and Light. We can take greater risk knowing his love and presence is unconditional and cannot be earned. He is, "I am." Nothing we can do will ever bring him down.

The Via Dolorosa is life as we know it and like the Via Dolorosa we can chose what role we want to play, we can stand on the side and watch, we can decide to condemn, we can follow the crowd, we can run and pretend this is not happening, we can walk with Jesus, wipe his brow, help him to carry his cross or we can stand up and say, "Not on my watch, not with my eyes wide open." "Enough." We encounter Christ at every turn, every thought and every breath of our being. It is that mutual influence of each other's lives that gives meaning to the lives of the other. The Way of the Cross is God stirring our deficits

and our bounty toward Dr. King's, "Beloved Community" and always pointing Him.

God has given us the innermost secrecy of our conscience to wrestle with our beliefs as well as our challenges to make sense of our ever present call to take and receive what he gives so freely and use it for His greater glory. We are called to use the gifts of our lives and influence to praise and serve God. Through Him, with Him and In Him we remember that God never presents us with any trials without also providing us a way out. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

The call to Antiracism amplifies the Holy Spirit in our work of Seek the City, the Racial Justice Circle, the Antiracism Task Force, Black Lives Matter Interfaith Coalition, the work to promote the canonization of the six black candidates for sainthood, Viva House, the Office of Black Catholic Ministry, the racial justice work of so many in consecrated life and so many others of all denominations. As we strive individually and collectively to eviscerate this systemic ill of racism, we must support and promote all efforts to create a "beloved society".

It is that we wear the crucifix around our necks and hang Him in our homes and in our churches and play out his life and suffering in our streets that we remember how He loved us to His death.

This we must believe and this we must live. "...tis Grace that brought us here thus far and Grace will lead us home."

The truth be told we all just trying to get through the day, one breath at a time.

As we journey together to the Resurrection during this Lenten Season, let's amplify the might, love, healing presence, protection and light of the Holy Spirit as we hear Jesus proclaim, during his Via Dolorosa, "...I am making all things new." (Revelation 21:5)



TONI MOORE- DUGGAN

Toni Moore- Duggan is an educator and spiritual director. She is a member of St. Ignatius Catholic Community in Baltimore where she sits on the Pastoral Council, and the the St. Ignatius Racial Justice Forum. She is on the faculty of the Caroline Center.