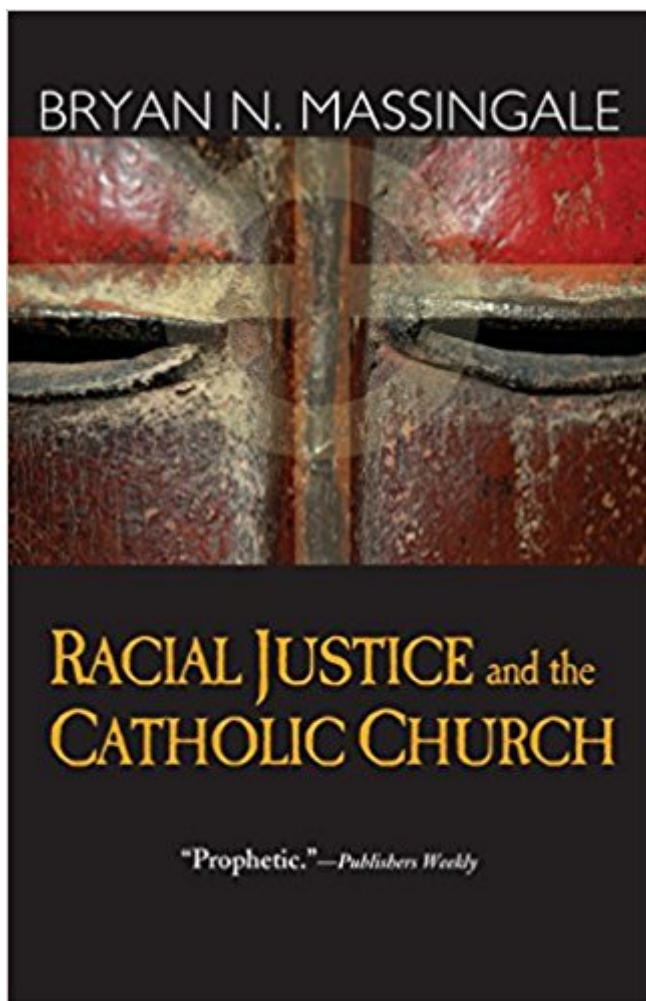


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# Racial Justice And The Catholic Church



## Synopsis

Here, a leading black Catholic moral theologian addresses the thorny issue of racial justice past and present. Massingale writes from an abiding conviction that the Catholic faith and the black experience make essential contributions in the continuing struggle against racial injustice that is the work of all people.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Lamenting that he sometimes feels like a motherless child... a long ways from home in his own church, Massingale, a black priest and moral theologian, levels a strong indictment of the Catholic response to racial injustice in this review and analysis. After answering the question What is racism? at some length, Massingale delves into Catholic history on the issue, taking apart three documents on racial justice from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1958, 1968, and 1979. Although he says the last two improved on the first, which offered nothing in the way of recommendations for action, none was marked by the depth of social analysis found in many of the bishops' other social justice documents. To improve Catholic engagement in racial justice, Massingale proposes using such resources of the tradition as the practice of lament, compassion, solidarity, conversion, baptism, and Eucharist. The author's moving personal reflections add a human face to his message, which readers who have a heart for social justice will no doubt find to be prophetic. (Feb.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Bryan N. Massingale is professor of theological and social ethics at Fordham University in New York. He previously taught at Marquette University, where in 2009 he received that institution's highest award for excellence in teaching. A consultant to many faith-based justice organizations, he served as president of the Catholic Theological Society of America and convener of the Black Catholic Theological Symposium.

the best evaluation of the Catholic Church's involvement in racial justice that I've read. The author, an insider, a Catholic priest, critiques what he loves in order to lead it to conversion.

Fr. Massingale's book provides an outstanding review of racism within the context of American society and the Catholic Church. This book offers a solid mix of rational analysis, effective examples, and personal experiences. In addition to an excellent analysis of racism in terms of its institutional and systemic aspects - going beyond the all too common frame of reference of individual acts of prejudice - Fr. Massingale takes it a step further by casting racism in a cultural context - a "set of meanings, values, assumptions, and beliefs." He also addresses white privilege head on and in clear and understandable terms, which is not an easy task. The examination of the bishops' pastoral letters throughout the years is excellent. Although there is the expected intellectual and thoughtful approach to this book, Fr. Massingale provides a wonderful balance between reason and emotion through his discussion of lament and compassion. I thought the following excerpt captures this well: "We act justly not because we are intellectually convinced, but because we are passionately moved. Compassion moves the will to justice." Fr. Massingale also opens up and shares his personal challenges as a black Catholic priest and theologian, in addition to providing insights from the perspective of the black experience and "community in struggle." The need for healing is also brought to light, as is the engagement of Catholics and Christians to understand the importance of racial reconciliation, which Fr. Massingale notes "is not concerned with the elimination of racial differences, but rather the elimination of the stigma and privilege associated with race." In closing, while this book details the major challenges of dismantling racism, it also inspires the reader and offers hope that with God's help the goal is attainable.

If there is any book ever that exposes the meaning, depth, intricacies and implications of race in the American society and life, this is it. Written in an easy to read, justified by an in-depth research and social analysis, Bryan N. Massingale's book exposes what is often taken for granted in the issue of race and white privilege. Now we know, that racism is not only the discrimination of blacks in history

dating back to the four centuries of slave trade. Racism is systemic and is constitutive of our meaning and value. Racism as culture is subterranean, unconscious, pervasive, undetected and forms part of social system of exclusion of blacks. And it continues today in this form. It is found in the Church: Catholic and Protestant which though speaks of human dignity reserves it for certain group and excludes blacks. For the African peoples of sub-Saharan Africa, this book is a must read. It liberates as it exposes the multifaceted ways we have internalized white supremacy to the point of complacency. We have become a people so easy to be ruled that we have become victims of bad governance, oppression, repression. This is the book that liberates the psyche and gives one reason for self-reflection.

This is a good book for introducing the issues of systemic racism. It is clearly presented. The book may be upsetting for some people who want to see racism as a personal issue--how I do or do not treat people. It explains that preference is built into systems. While the book focuses on African Americans, it's analysis of systemic racism is valuable for thinking about race beyond black-white issues. The work is honest about the Catholic Church's flaws and successes in dealing with issues of race, which I appreciated.

Exceeded expectations

Clear and good thinker...well developed

This book should be required reading in every Catholic formation program! In clear language, supported by extensive research Fr. Massingale has put down the baseline from we must start recognizing how much of racism's ignorance isn't even realized by the Anglo community. We must have a sound understanding about unconscious racial advantage of Anglos.

Great book! A must read for everyone.

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