



Struggling to Listen

Archbishop Gomez's reactionary defensiveness

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How should Christians and Catholics orient themselves in movements for social justice in which others might not share their faith? Should they foreground the aspects of their faith that motivate them to join such movements? Should they de-emphasize their religiosity? Are there other approaches?

2. Say a beloved Catholic relative was expressing some of the concerns about movements like Black Lives Matter indicated in Archbishop Gomez's speech: that social-justice movements are a "false religion" or mark a dangerous secularization of society. What would you say to them? How would you situate the Black Lives Matter movement in the context of your shared faith?

3. In an interview with *Commonweal*, Fr. Bryan Massingale described a normative whiteness in the Church as a form of idolatry, the "worship of a false god." What other "false gods" are worshiped in the Church today that stand in the way of economic, racial, and climate justice? What "false gods" can be found in Gomez's speech?

4. O'Reilly writes that "the Church is still struggling to listen, especially to the voices of the LGBTQ community," and that many Catholics are deciding that Church teachings on gender and sexuality are "not the truth." How could the Church listen better? At the end of the day, will the Church remain fundamentally unwelcoming to LGBTQ people so long as it maintains that same-sex love is sinful?

5. O'Reilly suggests that mainstream social-justice movements in the United States are led by prophets outside the Catholic Church, and that this is a serious problem for the Church itself. But is it also a problem for these movements? Is something lost in our national conversation when social justice movements are completely secularized?

6. What pastoral guidance should Catholics receive as they navigate debates about race, gender and sexuality, political correctness, etc.? What kind of guidance do you need or want?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Mollie Wilson O'Reilly, "A Harmful Doctrine," January 2020: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/harmful-doctrine>

John Gehring, "The Church Must Be Political," November 2021: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/church-must-be-political>

Regina Munch, "Worship of a False God," July/August 2020: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/worship-false-god>

Massimo Faggioli, "Lots of Politics, Little Legitimacy," January 2021: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/lots-politics-little-legitimacy>

The Editors, "Pastors, Not Prophets," July/August 2021: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/pastors-not-prophets>

Paul Baumann, "The Harper's Letter," July 2020: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/harpers-letter>