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## Take Five For Social

### Justice



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**Stop Solitary Confinement**

### JSRI Future Activities

#### July 31

Fr. Fred Kammer, SJ, will complete his service as Director of JSRI and begin a one-year sabbatical before being missioned to a new ministry.

#### August 1

Fr. Chris Kellerman, SJ, will begin his term as Interim Director of JSRI for the 2021-22 academic year.

### JSRI Recent Activities

#### July 12

Dr. Sue Weishar participated in a strategic planning meeting for the Louisiana Stop Solitary Coalition.

#### July 13-15

Dr. Dennis Kalob attended (virtually) the "Laudato Si' and the U.S. Catholic Church" conference organized by Catholic Climat Covenant and Creighton University.

#### July 14

The JSRI staff had their regular and virtual monthly meeting.

#### July 27

JSRI submitted publications and files from its first fourteen years to the Loyola Archives.

#### August

JSRI will submit publications and files from its first fourteen years to the Archives of the Jesuit Central and Southern Province in St. Louis.

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# What is Real Patriotism?

By Chris Kellerman, S.J.

Some people today insist on promoting a "patriotic" view of American history, focusing almost exclusively on the goodness of past historical acts and actors while downplaying or altogether ignoring our country's injustices. This is an understandable position. It is a good thing to be able to rejoice in one's heritage and one's country. Such joy can inspire us to do great things.



But, as St. John Paul II pointed out in his [1995 address](#) to the United Nations, authentic patriotism needs to be properly understood as radically different from nationalism:

... we need to clarify the essential difference between an unhealthy form of nationalism, which teaches contempt for other nations or cultures, and patriotism, which is a proper love of one's country. True patriotism never seeks to advance the well-being of one's own nation at the expense of others. For in the end this would harm one's own nation as well: doing wrong damages both aggressor and victim. Nationalism, particularly in its most radical forms, is thus the antithesis of true patriotism...

Patriotism, according to the Holy Father, is totally opposed to wronging others. Harming others in order to keep America first is not true patriotism.

But if patriotism is "a proper love of one's country," what precisely is that "proper love"? Pope Benedict XVI's great social encyclical [Caritas in veritate](#) (*Charity in Truth*) proclaimed that love requires truth in order for that love to be authentic. Therefore, if the love of my country is based on a lie about what my country is, this is not real love. And if my love of country somehow covers up or erases injustices and their legacies, this too is not real love; it erases the truth, while authentic love "rejoices with the truth" (1 Cor 13:6).

Real love of country means acknowledging truth. And it is simply true that the United States has perpetrated tremendous and unrectified injustices in its history. Our country has never paid reparations to African-Americans for slavery, even though Church teaching [demands reparation](#) for such theft. Our country committed terrible [atrocities](#) against Native Americans and still does not uphold its [treaty obligations](#) to them, all in clear violation of the basic demands of justice.

What if, rather than simply debating what should and should not be said about our history, we transformed that history by rectifying these injustices? What if we encouraged our elected leaders to [establish a commission](#) to study the issue of reparations for slavery? What if we demanded that our elected officials keep our treaty obligations to Native American tribes and have substantive conversation processes regarding stolen land and resources?

Such a process might not be pleasant. It might be very painful and require sacrifices. But, unless we want to slip into a relativistic thinking that pretends no such thing as justice exists, we must take up this cross and right our country's wrongs. Imagine the great pride we could take in our country's present if we transformed the significance of its past through correcting those injustices. It would be astounding.

Such a process would constitute justice. It would constitute "charity in truth." And indeed, it would constitute and be a strong reason for true patriotism. May God give us the grace and strength to never stop fighting for charity in truth.

*Monthly articles reflect the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of Loyola University New Orleans.*

*Please send feedback to [jsri@loyno.edu](mailto:jsri@loyno.edu)*

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