

Like many of you, I have watched events unfold across our nation following the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer and three other officers who let it happen. The outrage and the grief over this senseless act is palpable and is being given voice by thousands of courageous Americans who have taken to the streets to demand that our nation live up to the ideal of equal justice under the law.



That people are treated differently because of their skin color is a fact, whether you live in Massachusetts, Mississippi or Minnesota. The glaring inequities in this country and within our communities are undeniable. They exist because the

majority of us who enjoy the economic and social benefits of whiteness, continue to ignore the hurt our sisters and brothers endure every day of their lives.

When we ignore another human being's suffering, we not only deny their humanity, we diminish our own. In doing so, we become modern day exemplars of those travelers Jesus talks about in his parable about a Samaritan. First a priest and then a Levite, both of whom were religious men, looked the other way when they came upon a man who had been left to die in a ditch. But when a Samaritan came along, he saw a fellow human being in pain. And instead of looking the other way, the Samaritan did what he could. He attended to the man's wounds.

Some of you probably want to help but don't know what to do. First of all, let me say that no one person can fix the problem of systemic racism and institutionalized injustice. But we can do what we can do. And it begins by seeing rather than ignoring and by listening rather than turning a deaf ear.

A young black man named Shawn, whose family lived in the same Nashville neighborhood for 54 years, watched as his black neighbors moved away as the neighborhood became more gentrified and white. With the recent deaths of young black men at the hand of police and vigilantes fresh on his mind, Shawn posted on

Facebook that he was afraid to take a walk in his own neighborhood for fear that what happened to Ahmaud Abernathy and George Floyd could happen to him.

Well, some of Shawn's neighbors saw his post and heard his pain. And on Thursday, 75 of Shawn's neighbors, most of whom he did not know, showed up and walked with him. That is what happens when we listen. That is what happens when we leave the comfort of our homes and our lives and become a part of the solution.

And lest any you think that you cannot make a difference, think again. The wounds of injustice and racism may run deep. But so does love.

Terry+

