

We are all in this together

Question: What do the economy, the presidential election and “High School Musical” all have in common?

Answer: We are all in this together.

We are all well aware of the turn in the economy. The stock market, banking and credit and our sense of fiscal security seem quite uncertain. This is true no matter if you were “Joe the Plumber” or “Bill the Billionaire.” Whatever happens next, we are all in this together.

We recently celebrated our nation’s democracy through the election process. We each had a role to play in ensuring a peaceful transition of our nation’s leadership. We had a voice in our future. And, whether “our” candidate lost or won we will share in a common future together.

The release of the Disney movie “High School Musical 3: Senior Year,” offers another opportunity for a reprise of the all-too-familiar anthem “We’re All In This Together.” The storyline, very popular with tween-agers (young people ages 10-12), follows the adventures of the Wildcats of East as they prepare for graduation.

Each of these examples offers us a glimpse of the interconnected nature of the human community. As Catholics, our understanding of God as loving community of three Persons helps us to recognize that all of us are one human community: the Body of Christ – the church.

Unfortunately, when it comes to our sinful attitudes, words and actions, we try to “downplay” their seriousness by telling ourselves that “nobody was hurt.” Our individual sin does have consequences on those around us – diminishing our own capability to recognize the damage done not only to our honor but also to the integrity of our relationships. Sin brings alienation in a world desperately seeking harmony.

Too often, when we are able to note the ills of the world around us, we are quick to point the finger towards the other guy – an impersonal institution – anywhere else to

deflect acknowledgement of our own culpability. It is easy to accept the notion that I personally value equality and find that bias due to race, gender or sexual orientation might be somebody else's problem. Yet, this notion is rejected when we use inappropriate humor that offends the dignity and worth of a person created in God's own image and likeness.

It is easy to bemoan the poor and disadvantaged peoples in Third World countries and how our systems oppress them. But our choices in wearing the latest fashion or drinking the trendiest coffee while ignoring the work conditions and unjust wage of the workers make us accomplices in injustice.

Bemoaning injustice and inequality can become part of our talk at a water-cooler or a cocktail party. We can wonder when leaders, the government, or even the church might fix the problems, and, therefore, wash our hands of our own responsibility.

Yet, the wisdom found within "High School Musical" reminds us: We're all in this together. Once we know that we are all stars made in the image of God - and see that we're all in this together - we better understand that love of neighbor is inseparable from love of God (cf. CCC, 1878). And it shows when we stand hand in hand (to) make our dreams come true.

Solutions to the world's ills will not be resolved in individualistic heroic actions. Our world will change only when we join together. Our joining together is ensured to succeed if we collaborate to connect in with the plan and design of our Creator.

And, this is the "Good News:" No matter how unfair the world seems, God is with us challenging us to be in right relationship with one another. The life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is a sign to us that God joins along with us in singing "We are all in this together."

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