

Standing Against Racism, Standing Against Anti -Asian Hate/Racism

Good afternoon brothers and sisters in Christ! My name is Judy Colorado your Conference lay leader. I AM ASIAN, I AM A FILIPINO-AMERICAN! I thank Pastor Hannah Lee and the GNJ Korean clergy caucus for inviting me to speak today.

For the past four weeks, I have been in conversation with my 15-year-old daughter Jaiden, about the increasing incidents of Asian violence and hate crimes as she openly expressed her concerns. I am here today as one among you to Speak and Stand Up **Against** Racism, Injustice and Hate Crimes toward Asian Americans.

Before I continue on, I would like to invite my daughter to stand beside me today and hold up the poster that she made for this event.

My Story & Experience

I migrated to the United States in 1989 as a professional registered nurse with a group of young Filipino nurses who left our families back home to pursue our American dreams. I thought it was normal that all Filipino nurses were hired into the night shift. However, not long after, I realized that the main reason we were working on the night shift was that our white/Anglo colleagues preferred to work on the day shift so that they can have a life! This did not settle well with me. I made an appointment to meet with the VP of Nursing at that time and advocated for our group to be given equal opportunities for us to work on the day shift once positions were to open. I also shared with her that we had to walk 6 blocks to go to work on evenings and requested that security transportation should pick us up for our safety. After this meeting, the hospital provided us transportation to work for a period of time until most of us were offered day shift work opportunities.

Recently as I was having a conversation about this event with my son Joshua, he recalled his experience in Middle school where his classmates were predominantly Caucasians. Joshua recalls one student calling him "Chigger"- (derogatory word for a Chinese person). This student was also on the same bus with Joshua. Joshua recalled that every day he would try to get a seat at the back where the middle schoolers were seated, and my son was always shunned by this person. Joshua would walk his way back to the front of the bus where the first graders were seated and sat with them. This was demoralizing to him, yet he overcame it because of his experience of God's love through his family and the church who taught him that every person is of sacred worth, to be loved and respected.

The Stories of Others & the Facts

I want to lift up to you a mother's experience (from Tustin, CA) she said:

"I was trying to enroll my daughter in a gymnastics class and had left several messages to call back. I was finally able to speak with the owner of the business and asked why he had not returned my phone calls and was told that he did not like my name which is obviously Asian and he would not accept our daughter into his gym. I was so shocked at his blatant statement and hung up the phone".

The CNN's Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Hate National Report noted about 3,795 hate incidents were reported between March 2020 to February 2021. The top three incidents reported are:

- verbal harassments **68%**
- shunning (deliberate avoidance of Asian Americans)**20.5%**

- physical assault **11%**

- **Chinese** are the largest ethnic group (**42.2%**) that report experiencing hate, followed by **Koreans (14.8%), Vietnamese (8.5%), and Filipinos (7.9%)**.

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- **Businesses** are the primary site of discrimination (**35.4%**), followed by **public streets (25.3%)**

Hate incidents have been rising and violence against Asians/Asian- Americans!

The Tipping Point

The mass shooting in Atlanta, Georgia where 6 of the 8 victims were Asian American women, including 4 who were Koreans, is unfathomable. This is clearly the work of evil. This event saddened us...we are here today to join our voices and offer our prayers for the victims and their families...we all feel the collective

trauma this has brought to the victims’ families, to the Asian-American communities-to all of us!

Call To Action!

The prophet Jeremiah calls out judgment against wicked kings on his time as noted in [Jeremiah 22:3](#)

“This is what the LORD says: Administer justice and righteousness. Rescue the victim of robbery from the hand of his oppressor. DO NO wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless, or the widow. Do not shed innocent blood in this place.”

Today God calls us to speak up and stand against hate crimes, injustice, oppression and racism when we see it and when we experience it individually and/or collectively.

How Can We Make a Tangible Difference Individually & Collectively?

Individually

I have committed to Jaiden my 15 y.o. daughter that I will do everything within my sphere of influence and privilege of power to stand up, speak

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up and be a change agent AGAINST all forms of racism, injustice and oppression.

In my professional work as a chief nurse executive, I participate in our health system’s commitment on “Ending Racism Together”. I ensure that we execute on the strategic action plan, policies and procedures to address racist behaviors or actions of individuals including leaders. I actively participate in conversations and dialogues with leaders and staff to ensure we behave and act justly in every interaction, respecting racial and cultural diversity representations in the organization.

As your conference lay leader, I call on all the LAITY of GNJ to step up and work collaboratively with clergy and your church leaders to end the sin of racism! As a laity or lay leader in your congregation, I encourage you to initiate conversations and dialogue with your young people, with leaders and identify where you can make a difference in ending practices and calling out behaviors that perpetuate racism, or however they are manifesting in your church and in your community.

On Tuesday night as my son Joshua recalled his story once again, he pointed out two things that he continues to work on:

First- he continues to evaluate himself how he can role model behaviors to his peers, colleagues, or with the young people in the church ensuring that he is not saying words that might offend others because of their race. He acknowledges his own biases and continue to work to eliminate them by learning new behaviors that uphold the dignity of all people of any race and culture!

Second- to be an effective witness of God's love by sharing the gospel in every opportunity, to all people! He believes that if each one of us who experienced the love and redeeming grace of Jesus Christ can be

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effective witnesses and win more people to Christ, LOVE will overcome HATE and JUSTICE will flow like a river!

Amos 5:24 declares: "BUT LET JUSTICE ROLL ON LIKE A RIVER, RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE A NEVER-FAILING STREAM!"

Lastly -we can be stronger together when **collectively** we can end racism together! Our GNJ conference passed the A Journey of Hope Plan from our October, 2020 annual conference session. This plan calls for all GNJ United Methodist Churches to end the sin of racism in GNJ!

The plan issues an urgent calling:

"Honor the humanity, racial identity, uniqueness and sacred worth of everyone as we live out our baptismal vow."

As baptized Christians, we renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of our sin. We accept the freedom and power God gives us to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves...

Micah 6:8 says:

"He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you but to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."

I pray that individually, we can have actionable items that after we leave this place today, we can progress to make a difference in our workplaces, communities and in our churches. Collectively, let us continue to SPEAK and STAND UP AGAINST RACISM, and MARCH FORWARD to spaces of POWER that we may dismantle systems, structures and powers that perpetuate racism, injustice, hate and oppression. Oh, let justice roll on and flow like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream! Amen!