



Professor Paul Murray, Ph.D.

Sociology Department
Siena College

Professor Paul Murray has a long-standing personal and professional interest in race relations and the Civil Rights Movement. He has published articles examining institutional racism, definitions of race, and voting rights legislation, as well as biographical entries for encyclopedias. In 1993 G. H. Hall published his annotated bibliography, *The Civil Rights Movement: References and Resources*.

He is the 2004 recipient of the Jerome Walton Award for excellence in teaching.



Jim Owens

Jim Owens is a life long Catholic and an active member of Albany's Black Catholic Apostolate. In 1950 he was among the first African American students to integrate Salesianum Catholic High School in Wilmington, Delaware. A retired printer and graphics designer, he is a veteran of the U.S. Army and has lived in the Albany area for more than forty years.

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Proudly Presents

**“Catholics
and
Civil Rights.”**

March 29th, 2007

4:30 p.m.

Sarazen Student Union

Rooms 241-243

Free & Open to the Public.

Co-Sponsored By:

The Franciscan Center for Catholic Studies

The Sr. Thea Bowman Center

The Niebuhr Institute

and

The Foundations Program

Catholics and the Civil Rights Movement

What was the position of the Catholic Church in the U.S. regarding civil rights for African Americans? This lecture by a black Catholic (Jim) and a white Catholic (Paul) will trace the changes occurring within the church during the decades of the 1950s and the 1960s - a time when American race relations were undergoing a fundamental change.



Viola Liuzzo, Catholic housewife from Detroit, murdered by KKK in Alabama.



As Catholic Church moved into the 1970s it began to take a more positive stance toward African Americans. One of the most important figures during this time was Sr. Thea Bowman.

She converted to Catholicism at an early age and found a vocation as a Franciscan Nun. She is pictured above in her early role as a teacher.



Fr. James Groppi gained fame for leading open housing marches in Milwaukee.

Dr. Paul Murray - Talking Points

Before the 1950s the Catholic Church in America was largely segregated.

Black Catholics were only a small fraction of the Catholic population.

Catholics did not occupy prominent roles in the Civil Rights Movement.

In the North residential segregation within the Church was not enforced, but blacks often felt unwelcome. While in the South segregation was rigidly enforced.

Conclusion

The Catholic church has made progress, but much work remains to be done to break down racial barriers!

Jim Owens - Talking Points

Many religious orders would not accept black candidates.

The desegregation crises in New Orleans.

During the 1950s the Catholic Church began to change its position on race.

U.S. Catholic Bishops took a stand in favor of integration - 1958.

As the Catholic Church moved into the 1970s, it began to take a more positive stance toward African Americans. One of the most important figures during this time was Sr. Thea Bowman.

Lecturers:

Professor Paul Murray, Ph.D.

Siena College

&

Jim Owens

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