

Journal of the Black Catholic Theological Symposium

Volume 10

Article 2

12-1-2017

Letter from the Editor: What Happened Last November?

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Recommended Citation

Flint-Hamilton, Kimberly (2017) "Letter from the Editor: What Happened Last November?," *Journal of the Black Catholic Theological Symposium*: Vol. 10, Article 2.

Available at: <https://ecommons.udayton.edu/jbcts/vol10/iss1/2>

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WHAT HAPPENED LAST NOVEMBER?

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2017 has been a very difficult year. The whole world changed on November 8th, 2016. We woke the next morning to find that Donald Trump had secured the presidency. Many of us watched the news in stunned disbelief. After a campaign built on division, disrespect, racism, misogyny, xenophobia, and elitism, our fears had been realized. Most of us probably never imagined that it could happen. But it did.

It's hard to believe that so many Americans could vote for hatred and division. Trump may not have won the popular vote – nearly three million more voters cast their lots for Hillary Clinton, a margin of over 2% – but he won the election. What seems most shocking is the fact that nearly 63 million Americans could vote for such pessimism. How could we have strayed so far from true North? Is hatred and contempt so close to the surface of American culture? What are we doing wrong? The Obama years made the shock even more sobering – years of hope, of trying to embody the very best parts of ourselves, of considering the needs of our neighbors, of creating and fostering networks of support with our allies, of trying to see ourselves in others. All this juxtaposed with a contempt and arrogance the likes of which we hadn't seen in the political foreground for decades.

Then came the Muslim travel ban, the attempts to ban the transgendered from military service, attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), the taunting of political leaders both nationally and internationally, the US withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement, a tax bill that empowers and strengthens the wealthiest and harms those who struggle the most, the investigation into election tampering and Russian collusion and the attempts to suppress it, presidential support for a senatorial candidate who preyed on teenage girls when he was in his 30s, the victim-blaming in the aftermath of the Charlottesville tragedy ... and for the negation of everything that Obama put in place.

Yet all is not lost. Darkness always precedes the dawn, they say. Real freedom, real liberation must come with a fight, and maybe we had become too complacent. Maybe we made the mistake of believing that

the battle for equity and equality had come farther than it really had. And there have been some rays of hope. Several Republican members of Congress have spoken out against the insanity. In the off-year elections, a number of gubernatorial, state legislative, and special elections placed candidates in office whose platforms were built on support for all people rather than just those already empowered. And the scholars of the BCTS, in solidarity with ACHTUS, continue to challenge injustice.

The 2017 issue of the *Journal of the Black Catholic Theological Symposium* features several exceptional papers, including a joint statement of the BCTS and ACHTUS calling for solidarity and a commitment to true transformation for all, and Cecilia Moore's memorial to our dear departed brother Fr. Charles Payne, O.F.M. who gave so much to the world and especially to the BCTS. It also includes articles by both Simonmary Ahiokhai and John Odeyemi challenging the Church's stance on discordancy and the use of prophylactics in the shadow of the HIV-AIDS crisis in Africa; by Jeremy Cruz on black-brown solidarity, by Bryan Massingale offering a re-visioning of the often-cited phrase, "authentically Black and truly Catholic"; and by Dempsey Rosales Acosta presenting a Pauline interpretation of racial profiling. It also features reviews of the books; *The Ground Has Shifted: The Future of the Black Church in Post-Racial America* by Walter Earl Fluker; *Democracy in Black. How Race Still Enslaves the American Soul* by Eddie S. Glaude Jr., *A Semiotic Approach to the Theology of Inculturation* by Cyril Orji, and *Lynched: The Power of Memory in a Culture of Terror*, Angela D. Sims.

Injustice doesn't end by merely wishing. Continue to act, and continue to vote for justice and equality.