

Equal Opportunity Tribunal



ARCHBISHOP'S SPEECH

03RD DECEMBER, 2018

Blessing of the Crèche Ceremony

Archbishop's Speech

I suppose if you are objecting to having a Crèche put up here we might have to take you to the Tribunal downstairs. The Commission downstairs who might bump the case back upstairs here in which case, now how would that look? It would be terrible.

As Leela said we live in this amazing, diverse society. V.S Naipaul in a wonderful little book *Suffrage of Elvira*, says that Trinidad or Elvira was a crazy, mixed up little place where the Hindus revered Christian scriptures with great pomp and ceremony. The Christians celebrated Divali and all Muslim celebrations and when Elvira was finished with religious holidays it had very few straight days left in the year, and that, is really true of Trinidad and Tobago and our diversity is really part of the rich gift that we are.

And Trinity which means one, but it's many in one, it's three in one and therefore diversity in the unity. And that's the essence of who we are. That's who we are when we're at our best, when we can celebrate each aspect of our diversity while holding to the unity at the same time and never compromising the unity and never compromising the diversity.

And you know for the work you do from our tradition this is really the start of that work because when God comes as a baby every baby becomes a carrier of God and when God gives the dignity to a baby to be that baby it means every baby has that dignity, every child has that dignity, every adult has that dignity, and, therefore we cannot separate between this one or that because of race, age, class, gender, or where you live. We can't separate because of these things because the dignity in each human being that's what we celebrate when we celebrate Christmas, that, that this baby who is God himself says that each one of us has a dignity that is inalienable and that cannot be violated regardless of what we do ourselves or what foolish acts we might take on.

Each human being has that spark of the divine that cannot be taken away. And so, in the Christmas story itself you have the foundations for what you do here. And in this mystery of Faith you have the foundations for why you do what you do, and why it is important. Society has worked long and hard to move past prejudice and to move past all the different divisions that we put into human society. And you know I think it's a human condition that we, no matter what we do will always find a way to make a division between us and other people. Have you ever noticed that? So you might of noticed that in Leela's address that "we are the only institution that is working, not the others."

But, it is one of the human traits that we will find a reason for dividing between us and others. If you live on a street and you live on this side of a street those people are better than the people on the other side of the street. And, we have this way of doing this division and it is some need in us, and I think that's where it comes from there is a need in us for identity, and the only way we could find identity is by dividing ourselves from other people.

And so the need for identity which is a deep human need and a great part of us as human creates also this thing that we do in separating us from other people and then making ourselves to be better than the others we separate ourselves from. And that's really the foundation of why we need an Equal Opportunity Act, Tribunal and Commission. That's why we need it, because there is something in the human and across all countries looked. Across even in Russia where they practice

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equality, as Orwell always said all animals are equal just some are more equal than others. So no matter where we do it we will find a way to do it and that's a human thing. But in the Christmas story what we have is a God who invests Godself in the human and then says you know what if God is invested in the human and then born of a human and born as a human then we can't find ways to do that division anymore and that has to become obsolete in every society and I really applaud the work you do because working towards equality in a society is one of the greatest works to be done.

It is one of the things we really have to struggle hard at and our society has so many ways of dividing up the people. Race is the easiest one, every five years we figure that one out. The address is the next one. I mean I was parish priest in Gonzales and Rosary Church and many young people I told them put 40 Park Street as their address. Because if they went down town and put their address as Gonzales to try and get a job they wasn't going to get a job. So you know how many young people have 40 Park Street as their address? Which is Rosary Church. But, where you come from should not determine whether or not you could do a job. Who you are really should be the heart of that.

And again that's the mystery of the Christmas story. The who we are, we are children of God. We have that spark of the divine in every one of us. Who we are, we are created in incredible dignity and a kind of dignity that cannot be rubbed off from us, that cannot be taken away from us. That's who we are and that's what Christmas speaks to. And every time we pass the crèche remember that this is a great reason for remembering why you're doing what you're doing. And how important what you're doing is because what you're doing is a flow out from the mystery of Christmas and God coming amongst us.