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CTA in Louisville discusses race

Zoe Ryan | Nov. 9, 2012 NCR Today
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In 2007, the church reform group Call To Action held its conference in Milwaukee, called "From Racism to Reconciliation: Church beyond Power and Privilege." In the years before, the Chicago-based group had mandated an anti-racism initiative and created an anti-racism team to address racism in church and society.

This year's conference, held here in downtown Louisville, with the theme "Justice Rising," carries on that work.

"There's the saying that there is no justice without racial justice," Rose Elizondo told *NCR*. Elizondo presented this morning in a workshop about issues of institutional and internalized racism.

"So if everyone is not at the table as we are speaking about reform, as we are trying to collaboratively bring reform in our church, then we are not going to have a powerful reformation movement," said Elizondo, who does restorative justice work at San Quentin State Prison in California.

"But if everyone is included in all stages, then we can together, as people of God, as interconnected souls, come up with solutions."

Also presenting was Myra Brown, a member of Call To Action's anti-racism team along with Elizondo. She told *NCR* that "the work of anti-oppression and anti-racism is not in addition to church justice work but it is a part of church justice work because I think the church mirrors the struggles in society, around oppression, power, relationships, race relationships.

"It's part of our call to follow Jesus in creating justice, peace and love in the world," Brown said. "We can't really step over oppression and feel like we're really doing that to the best of our abilities."

For the most part, conversations around race do not happen in the Roman Catholic church, Brown said. Because of the church's position as a guide in the world, it's critical that these conversations happen, she said.

"We've been given a mandate to be light in the world, to be salt in the earth, to show some leadership and justice," she said.

(Keep checking NCR Today and follow us on Twitter at @NCRonline for updates on what's going on at the conference in Louisville.)

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