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Dear Sharing Friend,

"Why does she want to help those people?
Why doesn't she help some of her own?"

I was the "she" referred to above. The question was asked of the woman who had invited me to speak at her church shortly after the second Good Friday Walk in 1973. Who do you suppose the questioner considered to be "my own"? "Other women"? "Other white people"? "Other Catholics? Other New Englanders?"

One's perceptions are shaped by one's perspective. Which is to say that what we see, with our eyes or in our mind's eye, depends on how we've been shaped by our life experience. Those of us who are "white" have been conditioned to fear Black men. We have also been conditioned to live our lives oblivious to the dozens of invisible advantages bestowed on each of us at birth, just because we are white.*

The situations mentioned below, polls reveal, are viewed very differently by African Americans than by "whites".

"The August 2014 police shooting of Michael Brown upended the suburban town of Ferguson, Missouri, and sent ripples of shock, fear, pain, anger and uncertainty across the country. ... Since last summer, three other police-related deaths (John Crawford, Eric Garner and Tamir Rice - all men or boys of color), two grand jury decisions and countless demonstrations across the country have collectively signaled a need for **national dialogue** about how identity affects outcomes when African Americans encounter law enforcement." **

A national dialogue? "The chief obstacle to having an intelligent, or even intelligible, conversation across the racial divide is that average white Americans ... talk mostly to other white people."*** How about beginning by discussing race with a friend or within a small church group?

On Good Friday, April 3rd, I will walk for the 44th time. How far I walk will not matter. How fast I walk will not matter. **What will matter** is that my physical efforts will make a connection/communion between my faith and the reality of suffering caused by the dual oppressions of racism and economic poverty, and will ameliorate some of their effects.

Walking symbolizes my belief that social justice is fundamental to my faith, a belief rooted in the way Jesus lived.

This year on Good Friday why not walk a mile as you meditate on the forms of crucifixion that have been visited on African Americans in this "...land of the free and home of the brave..."

Shalom

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kay Dohererty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

* White Privilege, Peggy McIntosh Ph.D

** Teaching Tolerance, Spring 2015, "Ferguson, U.S.A"., Jamila Bey

*** The Atlantic, August 21, 2014, "Self-Segregation: Why It's So Hard for Whites to Understand Ferguson", Robert P. Jones

Christmas Blessings

Thanks to a generosity of time, talent, and treasure Sharing was able to send the following gifts to children in Alabama and Mississippi.

- 157 beautifully dressed Black dolls
- 57 gorgeous baby blankets, beautifully boxed
- 181 basketballs and 35 small balls