Opinion



(Unsplash/Gayatri Malhotra)

Ike Ndolo

View Author Profile



Stephanie Espinoza

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

July 17, 2021

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint



(Unsplash/Gayatri Malhotra)

The "Disinherited" podcast was dreamed of, talked about and blueprinted before we even knew what it was or could be. And in many ways it is still very much a dream, a possibility, a glimmer of light into what it means to be Black and brown Catholics grounded in radical action in 2021.

We were both raised in the Catholic Church, and for years, we have been tired of the many failures of the institutional church, especially in its rejection of movements and struggles that center Black liberation. Amid this disillusionment, we had a lot of offline conversations. We talked about how we, like so many Black, brown, Asian, Indigenous, marginalized Catholics, could grow so detached from the church that shaped us. We talked about the moments that radicalized us.

These moments, especially the last year, have challenged us to ask ourselves: What does it mean to live as radical followers of Jesus in this exact moment in time?

We are now taking these offline conversations and our own commitment to being in solidarity with the most oppressed in our world and church and publishing them as the "Disinherited" podcast.

Advertisement

Advertisement

Our podcast premiered June 17, and in the first episode, we talk about how we ended up tired, disillusioned and radicalized. We name our desire to operate outside the white gaze and describe feeling like outsiders in a supposedly universal church.

We are still learning as we go, but we know that as radical followers of Christ, we must try to leverage the access and tools at our disposal to work toward a world where our people are allowed to live and be free.

We are not experts, scholars, theologians, affiliates of any parish/diocese, influencers or thought leaders, and along with being raised in this church, each of us has worked for years in youth ministry. We know firsthand how the institutional church fails its flock from the inside.

"Disinherited" will center the voices that are, at best, overlooked, and at worst, blatantly dismissed within Catholic spaces. When creating a shortlist of folks to join us, we thought about all the people who have been pushed out. These are the women and men who are blacklisted, who are denied Communion, who are prevented from starting families, who are deemed "barely" Catholic, who are still here despite the hate they receive at the hands of their mother church.

We also invited fellow BIPOC Catholics who are community building and working to bridge the gap between Catholicism and liberation. In these interviews, we explore the many ways that the Gospel and Black liberation are the blueprint for us all to be free.

As part of our launch, we chose to use a flame as our logo, which was created and designed by Joe Sanchez Jr.

We look at this flame and think of Pentecost, the wild and prophetic occasion that is considered the birth of the church. For us, the Disinherited, it seems like we have been robbed of our claim on this flame, this power to speak the audacious truths of liberation. There are certain categories of people who, throughout history and in the present day, have acted like the keepers of this flame and have robbed it of its revolutionary nature. We've all heard them. Perhaps we've even tried to be like them.

But there's no denying it: This fire is ours. It's been ours. Every ounce of this revolutionary flame is for us to behold, to proclaim, to share.

It is our inheritance. We are reclaiming it.

Part of this work and project means that we are doing our best to stop investing in capitalist, white supremacist modes of being that expect us to produce at all times, systems that place our value only in what we do. We have a long way to go to divest from these ideas entirely, but little by little we go forth, imagining new ways to share knowledge and build power.

It's important for us to make it clear that we are not machines and we will not try to appear as such. We are not going to force this project to fit the expectations of grind culture, clout-chasing or any kind of algorithm.

It's all of us or none of us.

Welcome to "Disinherited."