

Concerned about Justice in 1st Grade

*Marie Nord, OSF, shared this in Peace Is Our Work when asked
“How did you become concerned about justice?” Used with permission.*

I think it goes back to an incident when I was probably in first grade...one that triggered and let me know even as a child that young that I had some understanding of what the world is about. It is probably the only incident that stands out in my memory from when I was that young. I was in first grade and we lived in Rapid City, and there were Indian children in our school. There was one little Indian girl who was always being blamed for everything. Whenever anything was missing, somehow it was always her fault.



Eventually it began to dawn on me. One day I found her standing in the corner of the building crying, and it was because of the hurt from that kind of prejudice. I think it was then that it actually dawned on me that it wasn't because she actually stole things that she was guilty, but it was because she was an Indian — she was guilty. From then on, an awareness of that kind of injustice stuck with me.

You know, when you study your Bible stories in school — it didn't make sense

to me that so many of these things turned into compromises when we got to be adults. and I somehow wasn't able to make the transition. I couldn't deal with it — that element of compromise — in the world I knew.

I couldn't divorce those things completely so that my life, in fact, even joining the convent, was a reflection of that. I didn't want anything to do with making a lot of money or having a lot of material possessions. Those things didn't make any difference to me. So, that sort of continued all my life.

