

Association of US Catholic Priests  
Anti-racism Subcommittee

Year 1 Task: Acknowledge and Address Racism Within Oneself

A.) \*Self-Educate: Learn the truths you were never taught or told.

1. White people are responsible for learning about the sin of racism in the US and in the Church, and in the ways they have participated in that sin.
2. People of color are not responsible for teaching white people about racism. However, many people of color gift their knowledge and experience of the sin of racism to white people.
3. Black people, Native people, Asian people, people of Latin American and Caribbean heritage, and other racialized groups, despite having been dehumanized, marginalized and oppressed in the Americas for over 400 years, have been telling white people during that time about the sin of racial injustice.
4. When racialized people share their lived experiences of injustice and oppression they are reliving trauma.
5. Embrace opportunities to establish mutually trusting relationships with people of the global majority, and be grateful to hear their experiences of racism and injustice.
6. Become familiar with Black theology and spirituality, and with the work of Black Catholic theologians and scholars as well as Black theologians/scholars of other Christian denominations.
7. Watch the following:
  - a. [\*Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America\*](#), Ibram Kendi
  - b. [\*Implicit Bias -- how it effects us and how we push through | Melanie Funchess | TEDxFlourCity\*](#), Melanie Funchess
  - c. [\*The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America\*](#), Dr. Andres Resendez
  - d. [\*The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas\*](#), Monica Munoz Martinez
  - e. Read [\*The assumptions of white privilege and what we can do about it\*](#), Bryan N. Massingale in *The National Catholic Reporter*.

\*See also the accompanying list of resources.

B.) Self-examine: Make an honest self-assessment regarding racist attitudes and practices.

1. Become aware of your implicit biases, blindspots, and acceptance of injustice, even if unconscious and unintentional, in regard to race and racism. Learn about white privilege and white supremacy and how each contributes to systemic racism.
2. Acknowledge personal experiences (past and present) in which one either embraced or avoided the occasion to speak out against racist attitudes - personally in family and social interactions, and professionally.
3. Dwell in the discomfort this awareness provokes.
4. Consider what actions that discomfort may be prompting you to take.
5. Ask yourself if you are really willing to come out of your comfort zone to embrace others who have no comfort in this world.
6. Ask yourself if you are really willing to defend those who have been marginalized in the Americas for centuries, and if you are willing to work for equity and inclusion for those people at all levels of society and in the Church.

C.) Self-activate: Answer the prophetic call. That is, speak out and take action to correct racism and injustice in yourself.

1. Pray earnestly to the Holy Spirit to give you the insight and the courage to take these action steps with conviction and commitment to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in our world.
2. Seek out and embrace other people and groups that are willing to walk the rocky road toward anti-racism together.
3. Actively embrace personal relationships with people of color, learn of their histories with racism, and respond to their injuries with compassion and acts of healing.
4. Watch [\*Improving your diversity IQ | Doug Melville | TEDxSyracuseUniversity\*](#). Doug Melville. Incorporate this in your current thinking and practices.

5. “Normalize” or “center” Black theology and spirituality by using it routinely as a resource for preaching, not just in relation to current events or calendar events. Both professionally and personally, speak/preach on issues of racism and injustice in our society on a regular basis, and especially during Black History Month (February). Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend (in January), Juneteenth holiday (June 19th), Black Catholic History Month (November), etc.
6. Take the opportunity to attend events in communities of other cultures (communities of Black people, Native people, people of Latin American and Caribbean heritage, Asian Americans, and others).
7. Use language and terminology that reflects the truth of our history. Refer to people of other cultures in terms that they prefer. These may change over time and require us to adapt our language.
  - a. Try to include the word *people* in your terms; for example, Black people, Asian American people.
  - b. Occasional use of acronyms, like POC or BIPOC is acceptable. Excessive use in writing and speaking can be dehumanizing and homogenizing.
  - c. It’s preferable to use the term *enslaved people* instead of *slaves*.
  - d. Learn about *settler-colonialism* and why, even today, non-Indigenous people in the US are considered *settler-colonizers* whether born here or not.
  - e. Learn how the Catholic Church sanctioned and participated in slavery in the US.
  - f. Celebrating your “patriotism” in this country should include and speak clearly to the mass slaughter of the Native People and the enslavement of African and African American people, as well as the conquest of the Mexicans in the southwest. Read [\*The Horrible History of Thanksgiving\*](#), by Charles Blow, The New York Times.

D.) Self-evaluate: Take an account of what you did or failed to do personally to be anti-racist.

1. What opportunities presented themselves in which you actively participated and engaged in conversation and interaction regarding diversity, racism and injustice?

2. For what reasons did you hesitate or actively avoid engagement in these opportunities?
3. Did you take any steps to address and overcome any discomfort you may have felt regarding these opportunities?
4. In light of your own experience regarding these opportunities, did you make any new resolve within yourself as to how you will respond in the future?

E.) Self-report: Share courageously and honestly with others your results

1. Allow yourself to be held accountable by others who are striving to journey this rocky road of anti-racism with you.
2. Offer encouragement and support to others who share their own self-evaluation with you.
3. Share prayers together of guidance and gratitude for whatever progress has been made thus far.