

Association of US Catholic Priests
Anti-racism Subcommittee

Year 2 Task: Acknowledge and Address the Sins of Racism in our Church

A.) *Self-educate: Research and identify the Church's role in upholding racist practices, historically and presently.

1. Identify areas of diversity within your parish/diocese/religious community and find out what decisions are made by Church leadership that directly affect people in racialized communities.
2. Question whether or not people in these racialized communities were included in the initial planning and final decision-making that directly affected them.
3. Embrace opportunities to establish mutually trusting relationships with people who belong to racialized groups, and listen to their experiences of racism and injustice.
4. Investigate how much diverse cultural expression is included in parish/diocesan/religious community events, especially in worship experiences. Be open to learning about how many of the spiritual beliefs and practices of Native peoples reflect gospel teachings, and how their inclusion in worship experiences can enhance spiritual growth.
5. Take some time to learn about the history of racism in the Catholic Church, and how racism, white privilege, white supremacy and Christian nationalism are systemically and structurally thriving, overtly and covertly, in the Church today.
 - a. Read: [*We Need to talk about racism in the Catholic Church*, by Patrick Saint-Jean, SJ](#)
 - b. Watch: [*Sister Patricia Chappell at the 2017 Ignatian Family Teach-In*](#)

*See also the accompanying list of resources.

B.) Self-examine: Acknowledge and admit to whatever role you may have played in these practices

1. How many or how few opportunities have you taken to attend and participate in church worship, parish events and community-wide events with people of cultures other than your own?

2. In whatever level of authority or leadership you have operated, honestly admit if you purposefully included or excluded people of other cultures in the initial planning and decision-making that directly affects them. Why or why not?
3. Determine your level of willingness to commit to challenging the systemic practices and structural processes of the sin of racism that are alive and well in the Church today.
4. Read [*Dear White Catholics: It's time to be anti-racist and leave white fragility behind*](#), by Andrew Lyke

C.) Self-Activate: Call our Church leaders (clergy and lay) to task regarding their failure to address and correct racist practices in the Church's structure today.

1. Pray earnestly to the Holy Spirit to give you the understanding, insight and courage to take seriously these action steps for the sake of God's kingdom on earth.
2. Raise the issue of racist practices in the Church today with the various levels of leadership to which you have access.
3. Seek out personal relationships with people of color, and if they share with you their histories with racism in society and in the Church, respond to their injuries with compassion and acts of healing.
4. Embrace the opportunity to advocate on behalf of those in the Church who feel that they have no voice, especially in the area of church governance on all levels.
5. Speak openly and honestly about the sin of racism in the Catholic Church in your conversations and interactions with colleagues, as well as in your circle of family and friends, including preaching opportunities and other public speaking events.
6. Do some concrete act of reparation for what has been lost or taken from Black people, Native people, Asian American and Pacific Islands people, Latinos/Latinas, and all marginalized people in your areas of ministry on an individual and/or community-wide basis.
7. Develop worship experiences that reflect an enculturated faith, i.e. experiences that include local symbols and practices to reflect gospel realities.

D.) Self-evaluate: Make an honest assessment of what you did (or failed to do) in addressing the sin of racism in the Church today.

1. Admit honestly how much any level of discomfort you felt prevented you from taking the “self-activate” action steps.
2. Determine within yourself if you are willing to work through the personal discomfort in order to bring comfort to those who do not enjoy it in the Church today.
3. Decide how much you are willing or unwilling to do to work against the Church’s racist policies and practices for the sake of those who are continually marginalized by this sin today.
4. Determine what new resolve you have made to actively work toward justice and equity for racialized people in the Church, now and in the future.

E.) Self-report: Share openly with others the reactions you got and your responses to them, as well as what you were able or unable to accomplish.

1. Invite others to hold you accountable for what you did or failed to do in addressing issues of racial policies and practices in the Church today.
2. Speak honestly of your own personal experiences in taking these action steps to inspire and encourage others to do the same.
3. Engage others to join in prayer with you to present to God all the successes and failures of your efforts to combat the sin of racism in the Church.