30 DAYS OF PRAYER: ACTIONS FOR THOSE WHO IDENTIFY AS WHITE

The document “Becoming Beloved Community . . . Where You Are” describes a long-term commitment to racial healing, reconciliation and justice. The process requires the cumulative actions of truth-telling (or telling the truth about our churches and race), proclamation (proclaiming the dream of beloved community), practicing the way of love in the pattern of Jesus, and repairing the breach in institutions and society.

The following daily actions – enlivened by daily prayer during August 2020 – begin to address the truth-telling questions: “Who are we?” and “What things have we done and left undone regarding racial justice and healing?” As Diocesan Commission for the Reconciliation of All God’s Children co-chair Whit Whitaker clearly states, “Actions are needed to manifest outwardly from prayer to create change; that is what makes prayer truly healing and powerful.” Similarly, the 2018 “Telling the Truth, Proclaiming the Dream” report states, “I wonder if we seriously know or understand that ‘the work’ means much more than having a training, or having a program, or having a requirement, or whatever other word we might use… it’s about a change of heart and a change of attitude.”

Suggestions are provided for weekly and daily individual actions that provide a truth-telling foundation for: deeper understanding of the implicit, or unconscious biases we each carry; recognition of the difference between feeling uncomfortable and feeling threatened; understanding of how white privilege and the history of while supremacy culture continue to benefit those who identify as white and harm those who identify as Black, Indigenous or Persons of Color (BIPOC); and the responsibility to commit to change and growth toward reconciliation.

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General Action Steps (along with daily prayer):

1. **Start a journal.**
2. **Every day, along with your prayer, keep a journal and write down one thing that makes you truly uncomfortable and one thing that makes you feel threatened.** These should not have an attachment to race or sexuality. Meditate on those and understand what each means and the different feelings respectively attached to each. Write down what it is that makes you feel that way about each.
3. **Every week write down stereotypes about Black people.** Don’t rationalize or qualify or quantify. Simply write one down. Don’t lie to yourselves by saying that you don’t know, haven’t heard, or don’t believe. That is not the point. Just write one Black stereotype in your journal -- sit with it and think about it, and what it means, and how it makes you feel (and it doesn’t have to elicit any feeling at all) and move on.
4. **Write this in your journal:** “The only reason for racism’s persistence is that white people continue to benefit from it.” Sit with it. Hear it. See it. Feel it. Sit in the discomfort of the truth of it, and let it make you angry or bring you to tears or feel shameful or feel embarrassed at your
ignorance (whether knowingly or unknowingly). Recall the times you said nothing and did nothing and accepted it because of fear; allowed a racist joke; been silent when you should have spoken loudly up and out, knowing that you would get a pass or be afforded grace because of white privilege. Until you sit and acknowledge, fully, the uncomfortable truth of racism, you will never be fit to be advocates for African Americans, and you will certainly not fulfill your expectations of what is deemed a true Christian, in your eyes and the eyes of the church.

Week One:
1-7 August 2020

1. For each day, write down as many stereotypes about African American women that you can think of -- again don't rationalize or qualify or quantify. Simply write one down; don't think about them and move on. Also, continue to write down one thing that makes you truly uncomfortable and one thing that makes you feel threatened.

2. Between days 5-7 of this week’s prayer journey, watch the trailer for the documentary White Savior: Racism in the American Church at https://youtu.be/2FWenQCC4-s Meditate on what you have just watched. Sit with your feelings, make notes, and move on.

At the end of WEEK ONE, write this in your journal: "The only reason for racism's persistence is that white people continue to benefit from it." Sit with it. Hear it. See it. Feel it. Sit in the discomfort of the truth of it and let it make you angry or bring you to tears or feel shameful or feel embarrassed at your ignorance (whether knowingly or unknowingly).

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Week Two
8-14 August 2020

1. Write down as many stereotypes about African American children that you can think of -- again don't rationalize or qualify or quantify. Simply write one down; don't think about them and move on. Continue to write down one thing that makes you truly uncomfortable and one thing that makes you feel threatened.

2. Between days 5-7 of this week’s prayer journey, watch the documentary Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man, Episode 1 https://www.facebook.com/theemmanuelacho/videos/272134207491609/ OR YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8jUA7JBkF4 (even if you have watched it). Don't be afraid to watch it more than once. PLEASE watch ONLY the first episode and no other ones. Meditate on what you have just watched. Sit with your feelings, make notes, and move on.

At the end of WEEK TWO, write this in your journal: "The only reason for racism's persistence is that white people continue to benefit from it." Sit with it. Hear it. See it. Feel it. Sit in the discomfort of the truth of it and let it make you angry or bring you to tears or feel shameful or feel embarrassed at your ignorance (whether knowingly or unknowingly). Say the words aloud and allow them to resonate and take root. Say it more than once. Meditate on it and move on.

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Week Three
15-21 August 2020
1. Write down as many stereotypes about African American men that you can think of -- again don't rationalize or qualify or quantify. Simply write one down; don't think about them and move on. Continue to write down one thing that makes you truly uncomfortable and one thing that makes you feel threatened.


At the end of WEEK THREE, write this in your journal: "The only reason for racism's persistence is that white people continue to benefit from it." Sit with it. Hear it. See it. Feel it. Sit in the discomfort of the truth of it and let it make you angry or bring you to tears or feel shameful or feel embarrassed at your ignorance (whether knowingly or unknowingly).

Tweet, post, and share publicly several times -- and not just to your "woke" friends. Don't be afraid to post and share more than once on more than one social platform. Meditate on the words and the action and move on.

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Week Four
22-28 August 2020

August 22: Write down one thing that makes you truly uncomfortable and one thing that makes you feel threatened

August 23: Write down (again) ALL the stereotypes that you listed over the past weeks for African American people. Look at them in the fullness of the composite list. Meditate on it. Write down any revelations or feelings about the list.

August 24: Write down the list of things that make you feel threatened. Look at them in the fullness of the composite list. Meditate on it. Write down any revelations or feelings about the list.

August 25: Write down the list of things that make you feel uncomfortable. Look at them in the fullness of the composite list. Meditate on it. Write down any revelations or feelings about the list.

August 26: You should be looking at three lists. Deeply look at them in the fullness of each composite list. Meditate on them. Now make a list of things and reasons about African Americans that make you feel threatened and uncomfortable (without trying to rationalize or explain to yourself which is which). Just let go and write them down quickly, writing down true and honest thoughts as if you are being asked by Christ to reveal these things. It doesn't work unless you are TOTALLY honest and truthful about who you are, and what is in your heart and mind. We are all indoctrinated into our beliefs about race and racism and this does not make you a bad person by being ruthless. Meditate on them. Write down any revelations or feelings about the lists. Write down what may be similar or different in your mind about the lists. Look over your list of things about African Americans that make you feel threatened. If you are wholly and Holy honest, you will have a list -- but you have to look very deep within. Ask yourself why you feel this way, but do not try to formulate an answer -- only the questions. Write down your questions. Pray on it in silence.

Re-visit yesterday’s questions from your list. Write down any new questions that might ask about why you feel a certain way about the uncomfortableness/threats of African Americans. Meditate on it. Allow it to move you. Now write down how YOU are going to take real action to stop the cycle and embrace the uncomfortableness without making excuses or deflecting -- NOW you have an action plan!

August 28: Meditate on the words "The only reason for racism’s persistence is that white people continue to benefit from it" and this call to action. Now speak these words aloud, and make a promise to speak these words directly to no fewer than 20 other people over the course of the next 30 days -- people not closely related, already "woke," or people in your congregations, or in your comfortable circles. More than 10 of these people MUST be African American. If you are a priest or leading a sermon for the congregation, you should share this mantra aloud (sermon, announcements, special message, etc.) if possible -- but that counts ONLY as in-person delivery and not your 20 people.

At the end of WEEK FOUR, write this in your journal: "The only reason for racism’s persistence is that white people continue to benefit from it." Sit with it. Hear it. See it. Feel it. Sit in the discomfort of the truth of it and let it make you angry or bring you to tears or feel shameful or feel embarrassed at your ignorance (whether knowingly or unknowingly).

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August 29: Watch the video of “Ella’s Song – Resistance Revival Chorus” (“We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes”) at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYmaOzaGI-Q#action=share](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYmaOzaGI-Q#action=share). Meditate, sing along. Share the song (written by Ella Baker and recorded originally by Sweet Honey in the Rock, whose members were active in the Civil Rights movement).

August 30: Review the attached list of resources to continue your education, encourage your action, and deepen your commitment to the personal responsibility required for reconciliation. Choose and write down in your journal those activities that you will complete in the month of September.

August 31: Now you are participating in change using prayer and you are building up your armor and your courage to step out on the faith -- the faith that we claim that we have. It’s time for the church, especially traditionally white-church congregations, to step up to the plate for the challenge of swinging and actually creating change by our outward manifestation of prayer-guided physical action. The time is long past for hiding behind our Bibles and the comforts of our inner selves -- and only praying. We should be praying for action within, and from, us to truly go out to do the Will of God that we so often tout but less often do. Your African American brothers and sisters are counting on you. Marginalized communities are looking for action from you. This is the start of racial reconciliation.