

# SACRAMENTO FACES RACE

## Clergy Talking Points Prompts For Further Contemplation...

***Sacramento Faces Race*** respectfully requests that clergy recognize your power and use it to lead change for good! *SFR* encourages clergy to speak to points addressing racism during the weekend of June 12-14. The **power of goodness grows** when our leadership takes the action of **initiating courageous conversation**.

*Please keep in mind that these prompts are urging you to consider what it feels like to be a Black-American. And, if you are a Black-American, what it feels like to be in our current situation and how can that be communicated and / or affect change?*

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- 1) What is Racism?... Really—Hint: It's not simply calling someone a derogatory term based on race. Hint: It isn't taking something away from an already empowered group. So, what is it? Who gets to claim it and have it be valid? Why?  
<http://www.isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic551851.files/TalkingAboutRace%20Tatum.pdf>  
<http://www.thesociologicalcinema.com/videos/individual-vs-systemic-4-types-of-racism>
- 2) What is the responsibility of White Leadership? What is the responsibility of Black Leadership? Other cultural communities' leadership? And, how do we come together?
- 3) White Americans often say or hear that Black people must pick themselves up by their bootstraps before expecting others to help. "I worked my way up to where I am. I am a self-made success. I came from poverty. If I did it, you can too." Why can the previous statement be perceived as racist? Who is in the position of power, and ignores (denies) the assertion of barriers to equity? What does it assume that is untrue? What systems are in place that aid Whites, or hinder Blacks? How do stereotypes play a role? How do our historic systems and now institutions play a role in inequity? How does where one lives, access to well-equipped schools, access to transportation, access to healthy environments and food affect one's ability to achieve? Does law enforcement enter the picture differently based on where you live? Who is more likely to experience the aforementioned road blocks? Why?  
<http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/docs/rcc/RCC-Structural-Racism-Glossary.pdf>
- 4) Power is maintained by the denial of the inequalities of others.
- 5) How does self-entitlement, self-protection, or self-hatred perpetuate our country's climate of racial inequality?
- 6) Do you know that experiencing generalized racism becomes part of brain and emotional development? Do you know that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder can be applied to some who experience racism? The psychology of oppression and racism is largely overlooked as part of the healing our country must embrace. What else have we **not** considered in our discussions

about racism? <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/culturally-speaking/201305/can-racism-cause-ptsd-implications-dsm-5>

- 7) What do people fear most in their lives? The loss of family tradition? The loss of identity? The loss of power? And, how does that relate to validating our generational mindset for change? Do we ignore the inequalities of others so we can maintain who we are?
- 8) In 2014, California passed a law that makes it illegal to fly the Confederate flag in certain situations. How does it feel to a Black American to see the Confederate flag? What does it do to the psyche of Black Americans, Black children? The Confederate flag waves proudly in some places throughout our country. The names of famous Confederates adorn buildings throughout America, including schools and parks. Can you think of another symbol that includes a history of hate that is prevalent throughout America? If not, what symbol would be equal to the Confederate flag to you?
- 9) To understand how or why so many people spontaneously left home, often with nothing but a suitcase and a few dollars, try to imagine being a black tenant farmer in the South and getting crosswise with the KKK. Think what it would be like to find yourself at the mercy of hooded vigilantes brandishing guns, whips, and clubs, bearing great malice toward your kind, and secure in the knowledge that police, prosecutors, and judges would look the other way. How does this relate to today?
- 10) There is a sacred responsibility we have to our community, to our neighbors. What are those sacred responsibilities and how do we exercise them? Is it a sacred responsibility to uplift those who are in need? Is it a sacred responsibility to exercise our ability to reason, then speak it? Does that include a sacred responsibility to participate in civil justice discussion? Is there a responsibility, or civic duty to vote?
- 11) Why were millions of Jews and other hated minorities unable to help their entire communities before being driven to the camps? Did they fight against those who rounded them up and separated them from society? Why did they need help from outsiders to stop the atrocity? How does this relate to the American institution of racism?
- 12) It is tempting to dismiss the problem of race in America as a strictly Southern thing, an institution associated solely with the Confederacy, cotton fields, grits, and a Civil War the North won and subsequently lost by losing interest. From the very start of the exodus during World War I to the urban riots of the late 1960s, African-Americans experienced great hardships. These did not only exist in the South. It took place in northern and western cities; hardships born of race-based fear, prejudice, and widespread discrimination in jobs and housing that gave rise to white flight, urban poverty, inner city slums, deteriorating schools, high crime rates, and a de facto segregation of the races is evident in all parts of our nation.
- 13) How do we benefit by supporting education about institutional racism?
- 14) Let's talk about the perpetuation of ignorance and fear...

- 15) "I don't like hearing about White privilege all the time. I'm not privileged. I'm just as disadvantaged as my Black friends are. I wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth either."  
(Definition of White Privilege) <http://www.tolerance.org/article/racism-and-white-privilege>
- 16) How does society benefit by maintaining the narrative of a country that currently has mostly White power? After asking this question, ask, "Does shared power equate to loss of power for Whites?" "What are we afraid of if we lose White power?"
- 17) The death of Michael Brown is only the near cause of the riots in Ferguson and interracial conflict resurfacing across the nation. The roots of this problem – the race issue in America – run much, much deeper.
- 18) How has racism perpetuated without overt awareness by White people? Is the media we see accurate? Does it present the actual, statistical picture, or what we want to see...? i.e.: Infotainment? What other influences play a role in recognizing and validating that our America is full of standards of acceptability that are specifically White? Additionally, when a standard is White, what does that communicate to people who are other-than-White?
- 19) White Americans seem largely incapable of recognizing racism in practice, de facto racism, systemic racism. We only see racism when the racists are here to scream about it. Institutional racism is often invisible to White people. Until we make a concerted effort to expand our understanding and vocabulary around racial inequality, the racial wages of gerrymandering and related voter issues, wealth preservation, mass incarceration, and police violence will continue without accountability. So enough patting ourselves on the back for the "progress" we have made — our perceived racial progressivism is largely overstated. Today, there is work to be done if only beginning with awareness and the willingness to question and listen to the struggle of our neighbors. <http://www.mic.com/articles/112274/the-side-of-the-oklahoma-frat-story-that-nobody-is-talking-about>
- 20) Systemic racism cannot permanently change through legislation alone. Hatred cannot change by allies simply supporting the hated. Hatred must be changed by those who hate. (The hater has no respect for the hated. Therefore, the person who is hated cannot persuade the hater to not hate.)
- 21) What's the purpose of categorizing people? How have these categories been used and by whom throughout history? Who benefits (who maintains power or is seen as the standard) from the categorization of people?
- 22) Black Americans cannot depend solely on gaining access and equality through political participation, economic status, increased population, or even through higher education. These attainments, although part of the solution, cannot happen quickly enough. The full inclusion of Black Americans into a society dominated by White Americans is dependent upon changing the hearts and minds of White people. How do we do that?