

Personal transformation is not easy. Most people do not like change. That is a generalization, but I know that change is a challenge for me. Some changes are easier than others. It can be fun to move around the furniture in our family room or take a trip to a place where we have never been before. But personal transformation is not simple. That is the type of transformation that Paul is talking about in Romans when he challenges us to renew our minds. He is asking us to embrace personal transformation to open our minds, hearts, and souls to become people who can discern the will of God. The Center for Reconciliation (CFR) is an organization that was formed in the Diocese of Rhode Island to effect change. It is dedicated to educating, engaging, and equipping people to look at the truth of racism in our society, in our church, and in our individual lives. This important work is our diocesan response to the many resolutions adopted by several General Conventions. In particular, the CFR is our response to Resolution A-123 adopted in 2006 that asked the dioceses of The Episcopal Church to repent of the sin of racism. Rhode Island is the home to the largest slave trade activity in the USA. It is estimated that 60 percent or more of all slaves in the U.S. and Caribbean came on ships launched from Rhode Island. Our church's roots are directly connected with the slave trade, the enslavement of people, and the profits that were reaped as a result of this horrific time in our history. 34 35 Romans 13:9 says, "Love your neighbor as yourself." In order to be truly engaged in a new life in Christ, we need to be open to racial healing, which will ignite racial justice, which will ultimately enable racial reconciliation. We can only truly be engaged in the transformation of our minds by embracing our own truth and being open to the truth as told by our neighbor's story. Truth-telling is the foundation for all transformation.