

Key Insights from Members of the Cathedral of  
the Assumption's Social Concerns Committee

# History of MTO



In 1988, the Office of African American Catholic Ministries initiated the MTO process as a tool to dismantle racism. Previously in 1979, A.A.C.M. offices across the United States were charged with the responsibilities by their local constituents to address the sin of racism. The work initiated by our African American Catholic Bishops, National Black Catholic Sisters Conference and founding members of the National Association of Black Catholic Administrators became the seeds for MTO.

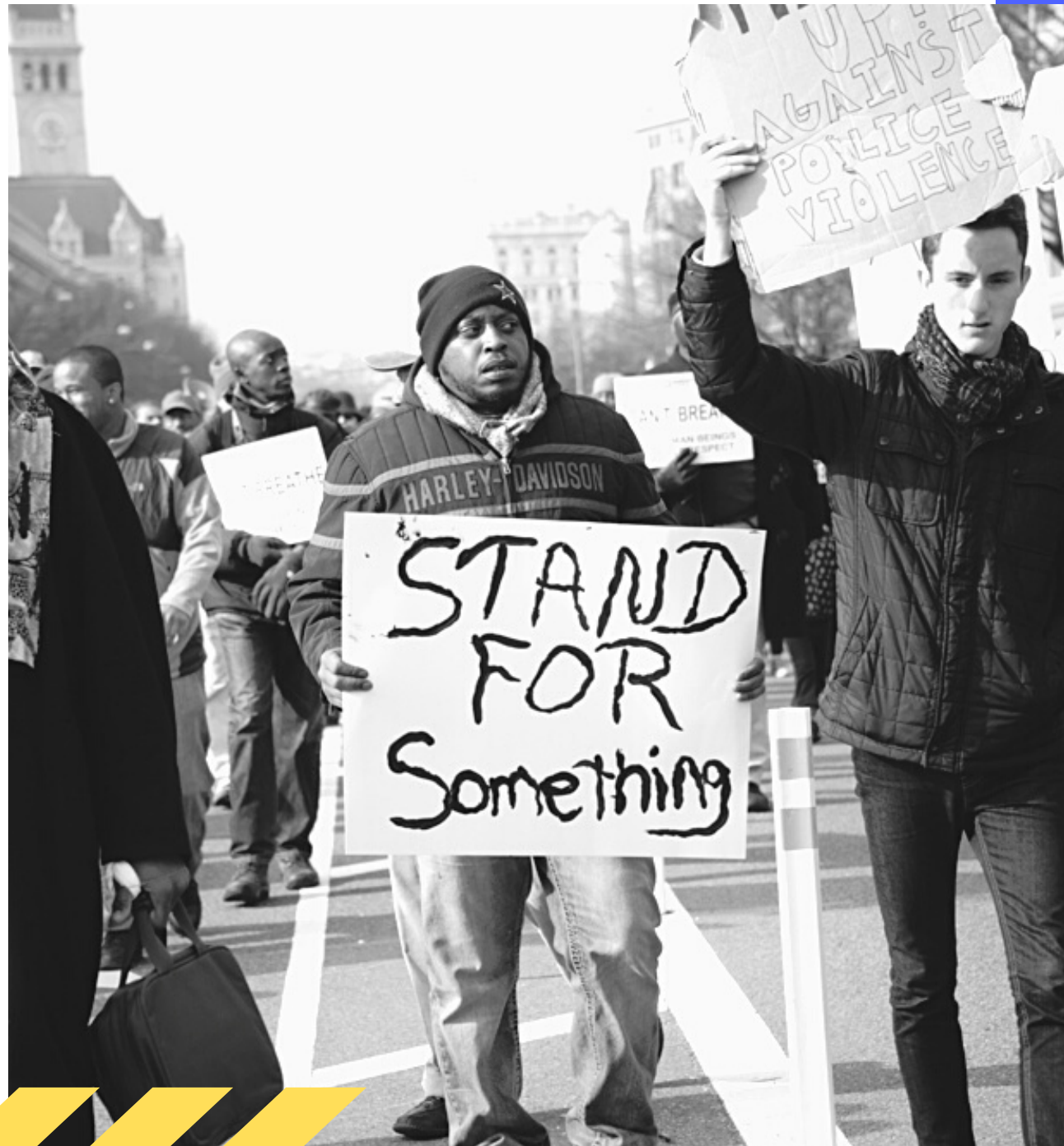


# MTO in the Archdiocese of Louisville

In 1988, the Office of African American Catholic Ministries in the Archdiocese of Louisville initiated the Moving Towards Oneness process as a tool to dismantle racism. Throughout the intervening years, the process has been updated and revised to respond to the current climate for racial justice issues. The most recent version is a result of the racial protests and unrest associated with the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor.



*Our 3 parish MTO was facilitated by Janice Mulligan,  
OMM's African American Catholic Ministries Associate Director.*



# Introduction

In 2021, eight members of the Cathedral parish were invited to participate in a journey of active listening and reconciliation with members of two other Archdiocesan faith communities: St. Augustine and St. Bernard parishes.



# St. Augustine Catholic Church

In 1869, Father John Spalding was appointed to organize African American Catholics in Louisville, KY. The group worshiped in the cellar of the Cathedral of the Assumption until the new church, St. Augustine, opened in 1870. At that time, it became the first African American Catholic Church in the diocese and was one of only six African American Catholic Churches in the United States. The parish is devoted to bringing the Word and Eucharist of our loving God to all people by our witness to God's presence in our worship, family life, social justice and outreach to the broader community.



# St. Bernard Catholic Church

St. Bernard Parish was established to accommodate the growth of suburban Jefferson County and the large number of families who were employed by the General Electric Company. St. Bernard was established during the turbulence of the 1960s and the changes within the Church from the Second Vatican Council. The atmosphere of change did much to forge the nature of St. Bernard Parish, as diversity of opinion led to tolerance, which tempered by Christian love, evolved into a sense of spiritual unity centered around the celebration of the Eucharist. This unity in the Mass is the glue that has bonded the individuals in this Highview neighborhood into a community of faith. St. Bernard is a parish alive in stewardship and very active in social justice and community ministries.

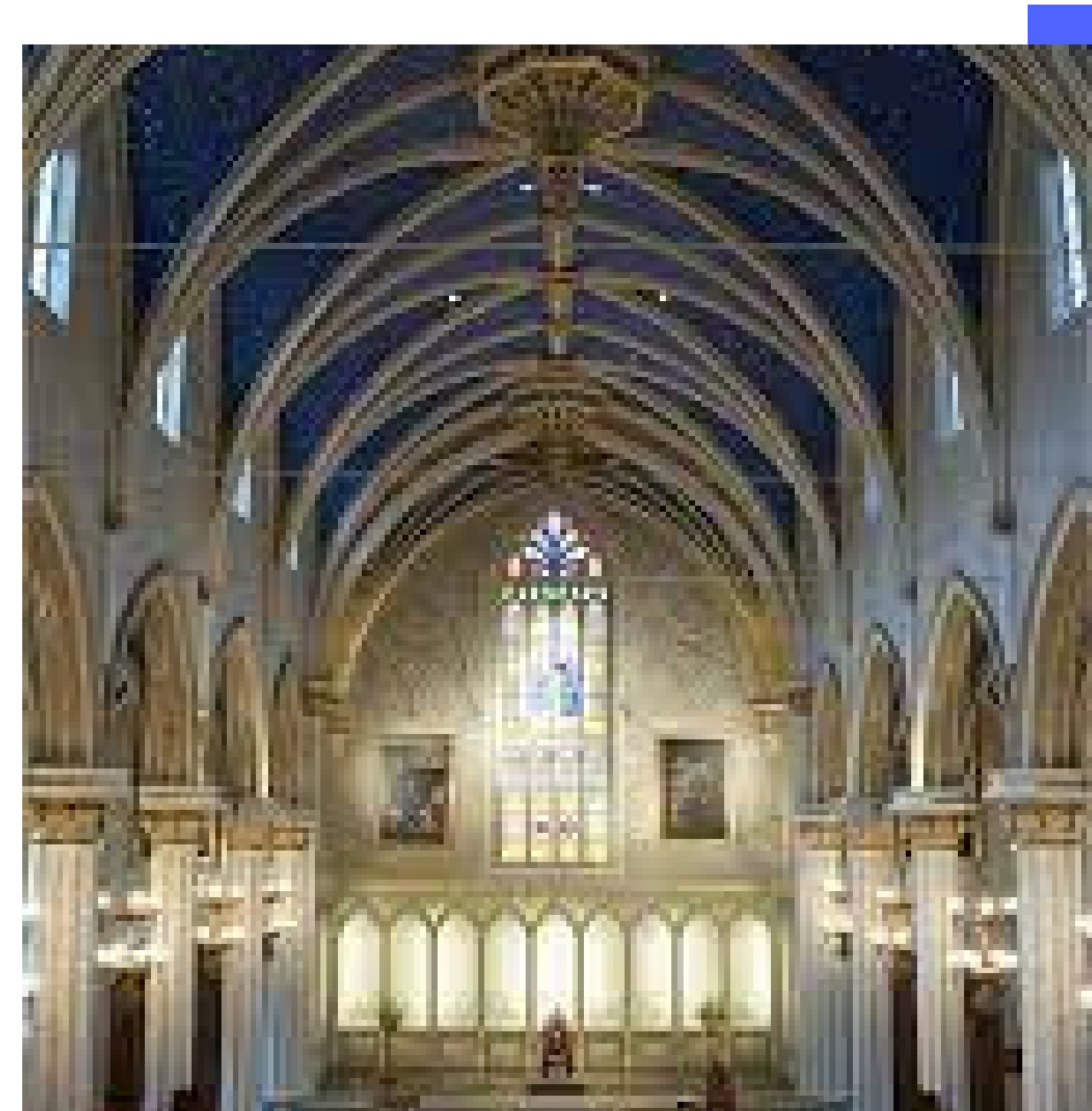
7500 Tangelo Dr. Louisville, KY 40228



# The Cathedral of the Assumption

The Catholic congregation in Louisville in the early 1800s became St. Louis Parish in 1811. When the seat of the diocese was moved from Bardstown to Louisville in 1841, the current Cathedral was built around the St. Louis structure and was dedicated to Our Lady of the Assumption in 1852. The Cathedral of the Assumption embraces its unique dual role of the Mother Church of the Archdiocese of Louisville as well as diverse parish in the heart of the city. We take seriously the scriptural call to “do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God” (Micah 3:6). We have a rich and active Social Concerns Ministry that supports a variety of events and programs based on the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

433 South Fifth Street Louisville KY 40202



# Our Journey

A Five-Week Learning and  
Listening Program





# **M.T.O. With A.B.C.**

**AKA "Moving Towards Oneness with Augustine,  
Bernard and Cathedral communities"**

**Our five-week journey began in late 2021 with the expressed goal,  
"To foster learning, listening and understanding about how systems  
in our society unfairly disenfranchise/exclude non-white people,  
including in the Archdiocese."**





# Session 1 Learnings

Built to foster conversations among the 3 parish communities and to expand understanding of the challenges of black and brown catholic communities the session included readings, breakouts, and thoughtful and sincere prayer.

- Bonding Exercises - Breakout groups from each of the communities were invited to share what is important to them in the community at large, as well as in their own faith communities.
- Enrichment Survey & Character Grid
- Closing Prayer for Racial Harmony

*We are sisters and brothers of the one God, the earth is our heritage.*

*Freedom is our birthright. We journey together.*



# Session 2 Learnings

The purpose of this session was to identify internal biases within ourselves, and to identify ways to challenge those biases.


- Racial Awareness - Discuss the ways that systems in our society have conditioned us to think a certain way about people who are different from us. Challenge our biases and self-identity; identification of our racial attitudes.

- Closing Prayer for Justice and Peace






# Session 3 Learnings

- Recognizing our attitudes towards others is a key to increasing our understanding the different points of view among people who share the same religious background, but do not share the same "lived experience".
  - Conversations - to help participants to begin to identify for themselves, the ways in which institutional racism functions.
  - Scenarios - What makes us feel a certain way about someone? Reflect on how racist attitudes and/or behaviors are being expressed. Identify way the situation could be addressed in a more anti-racist manner.
  - Levels of Racism - Expose the participants to the realities of racism thru scenarios.
  - Closing Prayer "God of All People"
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# Session 4 Learnings

This session, entitled "Looking at Me" was developed to help participants understand our individual roles in our unconscious support of systemic racism.


- "Looking at Me" Inventory Exercise
  - Reflection: Inventory of Systemic Racism
  - Closing Prayer "A Prayer for Mercy" & "Lord, Lord, Open Unto Me"
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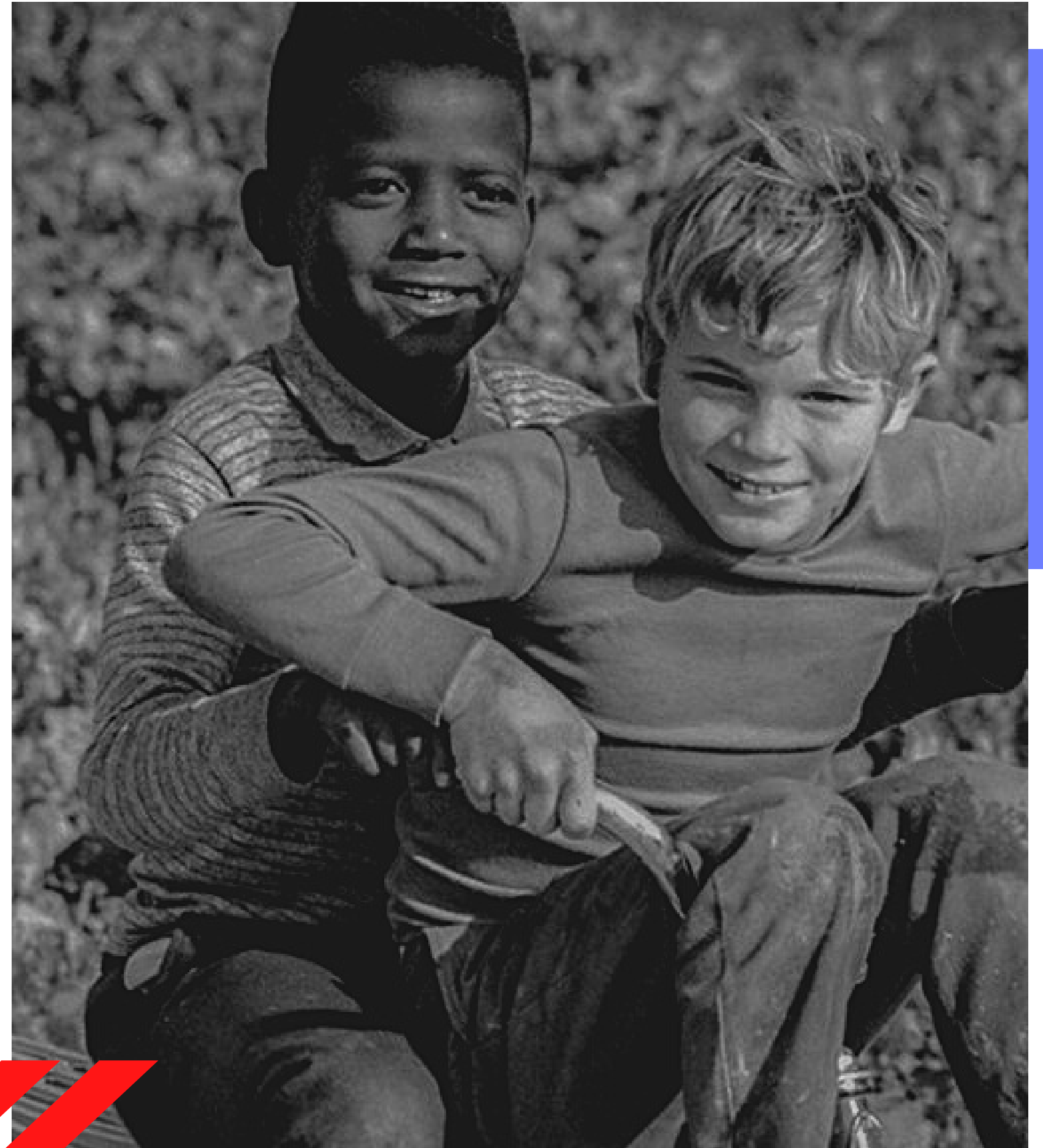


# Session 5 Learnings

*Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. ~1 John 4:20*

- In this session, our group pledged to "Walk in My Shoes" to develop a daily living challenge to eradicate racism within ourselves as well as where we see it in the world. This session also included a conversation around a 6 month plan of action.
  - The Gifts we Share Towards Racial Justice - How can we use our individual talents to amplify the problem of racism in our community(ies)
  - Six-Month Plan of Action - Near-future plans to change the landscape and conversation around racism and how to combat it within our church.
  - Closing Prayer "The Chosen Vessel"
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# Moving Towards Oneness Goals



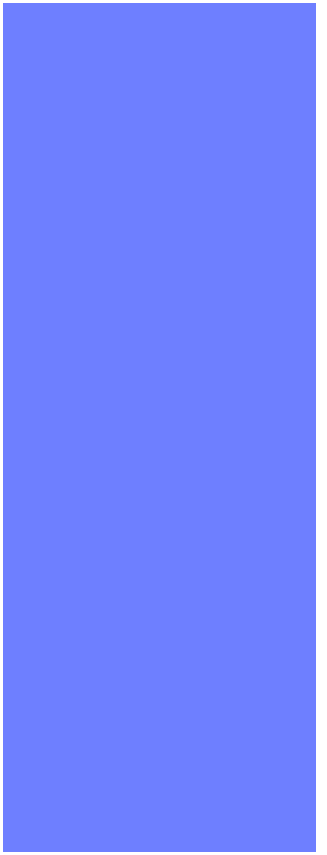


# Short Term Goals

- Invite the Catholic High Schools of Louisville to include a book on racial justice in the Catholic Church
- Determine a "Good Works" project that specifically supports an African-American led initiative in the Archdiocese.
- Increase our efforts to maintain the relationship between the 3 parishes that participated in this program together.
- Lend our support to the ongoing effort to establish a Catholic School in Louisville's West End.



# Long Term Goals

- Unite with other MTO groups in prayer, dialog, and action.
  - Use the combined vision, talents, resources and relationships to further minority led initiatives in our community.
  - Be a conduit for "Good Works" in our respective and collective ABC parishes.
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# Resources





# YouTube

- Facing the Uncomfortable Truth:  
<https://youtu.be/av9YzHannoc>
- Silent Beats by Jon Mchu  
<https://youtu.be/76BboyrEl48>
- The Gardner: The Three Levels of Racism by Dr. Camara Jones  
<https://youtu.be/7M0du3lS7rA>





# Readings

Parishioners will find challenging and thought-provoking insights into how racism affects all of our lives, and how it affects our relationship with God.

- Racial Justice and the Catholic Church by Fr. Bryan N. Massingale
- Stamped from the Beginning by Ibram X. Kendi
- Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence by Derald Wing Sue





# Insights from Participants

*I admire the faith and tenacity of the Women of St. Augustine, especially with what they have had to endure over the years, and still keeping the faith.*

Jack Lydon

*The MTO experience is all about building relationships. Relationships lead to true understanding and empathy – necessary ingredients to help achieve racial equality and healing.*

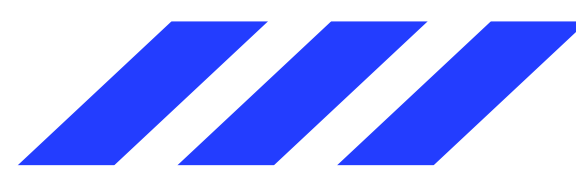
Greg Sekula

*The depth of sharing and trust among members of our group is a gift I treasure.*

Angela Wiggins



# Insights from Participants



*I think that the experience was beneficial to everyone, in that everyone met and had crucial conversations about race and racial relations in our parishes, our Church, our city, and our country. Each of us heard stories and shared stories about real life, real encounters. For those of us who have had limited exposure to the African American community and the black experience, there were many eye opening moments. I hope that for the Catholics of color who participated, what they heard was equally impactful and helps heal any wounds left by their experiences, especially within our Church.*

*I would recommend this process to everyone. I would also hope that the Archdiocese continues to invest in this process, not only to grow it in scope and reach, but to expand upon the "so what" of the process. While this format is great for changing hearts, and I truly believe that, we need to find a way to then lead those hearts into action. Even small first steps that are provided and guided by those who have a passion for inflaming hearts would be helpful in getting those who are kindling a new fire started on a lifelong journey.*

*God bless all those who are working for unity in our Church. That is the first pillar of Catholicism.*

*We are One.*

Deacon Ted Marks





# Prayers for Racial Justice

Leader:

Almighty and loving God, you, who created ALL people in your image, lead us to seek your compassion as we listen to the stories of our past. You gave your only Son, Jesus, who died and rose again so that sins will be forgiven. We place before you the pain and anguish that so many people of color have experienced. We live in faith that all people will rise from the depths of despair and hopelessness. We are sorry and ask God's forgiveness. Touch the hearts of the broken and afflicted and heal their spirits. In your mercy and compassion walk with us as we continue our journey of healing to create a future that is just and equitable.

Lord, you are our hope. Amen.

(Adapted from the Australian Council of Churches)



A reading from the Book of Proverbs:

Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.



# Litany for Racial Justice



*Response: You are a child of God.*

You deserve to be able to walk alone. We remember Clifford Glover. *Response*

You deserve to be able to decorate for a birthday party. We remember Claude Reese. *Response*

You deserve to be able to ask the police a question. We remember Randy Evans. *Response*

You deserve to be able to cash a check. We remember Yvonne Smallwood. *Response*

You deserve to be able to take out your wallet. We remember Amadou Diallo. *Response*

You deserve to be able to hold a hairbrush. We remember Sean Bell. *Response*

You deserve to be able to party on New Year's. We remember Oscar Grant. *Response*

# Litany continued



You deserve to be able to walk home. We remember Trayvon Martin. *Response*

You deserve to be able to play loud music. We remember Jordan Davis. *Response*

You deserve to be able to ask for help. We remember Jonathan Ferrell and Renisha McBride. *Response*

You deserve to be able to sleep. We remember Alyana Jones. *Response*

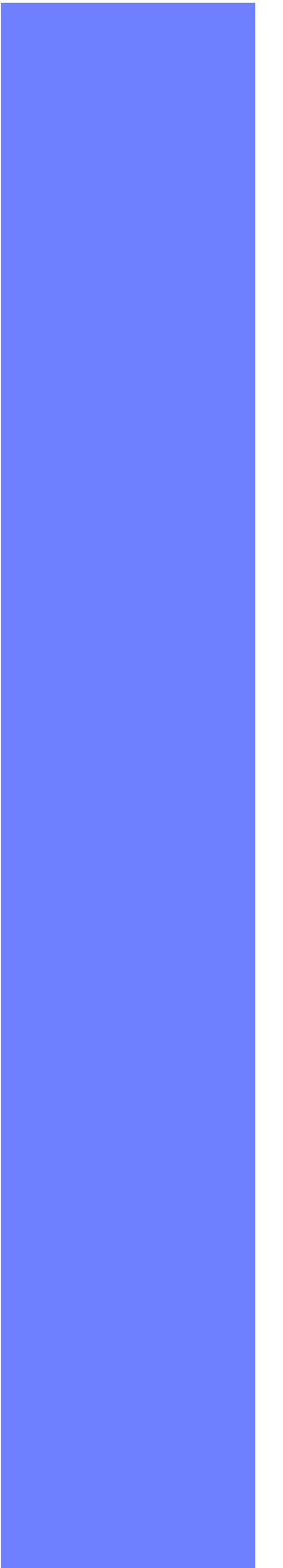
You deserve to be able to shop at Walmart. We remember John Crawford. *Response*

You deserve to be able to walk from the store. We remember Michael Brown. *Response*

You deserve to be able to play cops and robbers. We remember Tamir Rice. *Response*

You deserve to be able to run. We remember Walter Scott. *Response*

You deserve to be able to live. We remember Freddie Gray. *Response*





# Litany continued

You deserve to be able to go to Bible Study. We remember the Charleston 9: Rev. Clementa Pickney, Cynthia Hurd, Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, Tywanza Sanders, Myra Thompson, Ethel Lee Lance, DePayne Middleton-Doctor, Susie Jackson and Daniel Simmons. *Response*

You deserve to be able to get a traffic ticket safely. We remember Sandra Bland. *Response*

You deserve to be able to spend time with your loved ones at home. We remember Breonna Taylor. *Response*

You deserve to be able to have a car problem. We remember Corey Jones. *Response*

You deserve to be able to sell CDs. We remember Alton Sterling. *Response*

You deserve to be able to lawfully carry a weapon. We remember Philando Castile. *Response*

You deserve to be able to stand next to your car. We remember Terrence Crutcher. *Response*



# Litany continued



You deserve to be able to talk on a cell phone. We remember Stephen Clark. [\*Response\*](#)

You deserve to be able to relax in your own home. We remember Botham Jean. [\*Response\*](#)

You deserve to be able to look out of the window. We remember Atatiana Jefferson. [\*Response\*](#)

You deserve to be able to stand outside your apartment complex. We remember Tony McDade. [\*Response\*](#)

You deserve to be able to go jogging. We remember Ahmaud Arbery. [\*Response\*](#)

You deserve to be able to drive your car. We remember Desmond Franklin. [\*Response\*](#)

You deserve to be able to gather with friends in a parking lot. We remember David McAtee. [\*Response\*](#)



# Litany continued



**You deserve to be able to buy something from the corner store. We remember George Floyd. Response**

**We remember all who have been killed in senseless violence and we respond together: Response  
Amen.**

**Leader: Help us to dissolve the barriers of race and work for a just society in which none are despised and discriminated against on the basis of false division of race and where all are valued for their true humanity. We ask this in the name of Jesus who saw beyond all human divisions and reached out to the good within each person.**

**Amen.**







