

## We Have a Dream – Meeting Summary for May, 2022

We began with prayer.

We summarized the significant steps our WHaD group made this quarter:

- Parish Council approved sending our acknowledgement and request letter to Bishop Lewandowski from the entire parish. Mailed April 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Parish Council approved a Town Hall to inform parishioners of our journey and invite them to be allies.
- Peg and Skipp zoomed with Bishop Lewandowski and explained our journey and he shared the catholic center's efforts to battle racism in the archdiocese. He described the Racial Justice Coordinating Council's areas of focus in the Catholic Center. Bishop Lewandowski will join our Town Hall Meeting on **Monday, June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022**.
- Our Racial Equity Fund is now established. We have already responded to two critical needs for South Baltimore Community Land Trust (SBCLT): health care for the full time staff and internet access in the SBCLT office spaces.
- The Racial Equity: We Have a Dream web page is on the St. V's website, housing our mission statement and acknowledgement of racial injustice, the videos and summaries of our monthly meetings, witness statements, instructions for donating to our Racial Equity Fund and a link to SBCLT website.
- Fr. Ray shared that the Catholic Center hired someone to take a comprehensive look at our urban churches, following a synodal model.
- Meleny Thomas, the director of SBCLT and a few of her team joined us on our April WHaD zoom meeting. Their passion and leadership skills validated our choice for an excellent organization to support.

The rest of the meeting was dedicated to “how to talk to white people about race” and developing a greater understanding of “white fragility”, “white privilege” and “white supremacy”, to foster acceptance and growth of our initiative as we proceed with Christian love.

Possible Talking Point with others:

- We didn't know much about the history of racism and our own white fragility when we began meeting. We understood people of color had disadvantages but didn't fully comprehend the scope of our white privilege.
- White men had the power and created barriers for people of color from which white people benefit.
- People believe admitting we are racist implies we are not good. To lessen their resistance to the “bad” stigma that racism is only discrete acts of individuals, we need to focus instead on the causes and results of the complex racist systems in place.

Consequences of believing white success is due to merit, with no regard to implicit bias and racist policies backed by white legal and institutional authority, continues white privilege.

Conversation needs to be personal to find out if a person believes there are barriers to equality in the U.S. eg. “Did you ever feel that someone from a different neighborhood, school, background or class had more advantages than you?” A person with a different skin color can feel the same way. Starting a conversation with an awareness that there are inequalities for people not of their doing, helps us understand the scope of inequities.

- White people feel their self-worth reinforced, have positive expectations, freedom from the burden of race, a sense of belonging and entitlement; when this is challenged it triggers a protective defensive response of white fragility.
- White supremacy is also a structure, not an event; a system of domination that is “learned” from an early age and reinforced through media and social interactions. The narrow view of “white supremacy” focuses only on hate groups and attacks.
- However poor a white person might be, they usually have more access than what is available to people of color who are constantly aware of what their color “allows” them to do. Structures and systems are set up with biases and assumptions made because of skin color.
- White privilege means not having to even think about my color.
- The Implicit Bias Test (whether a white or black person took the test) revealed our society is a victim of implicit racism resulting in bias against people of color.
- Systemic racism for people of color manifests as fewer opportunities. “Who you know” often opens doors and we congregate with our own group. What if you don’t know influential people?
- The results of racist structures is emphasized in neighborhoods of people of color with a scarcity of banks and grocery stores, access to doctors’ offices, lack of restaurants and shops, and a greater percentage of landfills and environmental hazards.
- Black women and their babies have much greater health risks because the care they are given is not as robust as the white women and babies.
- Freed slaves who migrated to Canada received education, job training and were treated equally, whereas in our country freed black men and women were re-instituted into servitude.

We ended with prayer.