

## OUR STORIES



### **TAKING STEPS FOR RACIAL JUSTICE: PRAYER, EDUCATION, AND ACTION**

Another death. Another uprising. We've been here before.

If we want change, we must strengthen our commitment to this work. We must seek out new ways to stand in solidarity. Join us in committing to prayer, education, and action so that we might finally see justice.

#### Prayer

Ground yourself in prayer. The fight for justice will be long, it will require endurance. As people of faith, we can look to God for the strength we need. If you can't find the right words to pray, consider using one of the prayers listed below.

#### **A Prayer for Racial Justice**

*Lord, Jesus Christ  
who reached across the ethnic boundaries  
between Samaritan, Roman and Jew  
who offered fresh sight to the blind and freedom to captives,  
help us to break down the barriers in our community,  
enable us to see the reality of racism and bigotry,  
and free us to challenge and uproot it  
from ourselves, our society and our world.*

John Bucki, SJ

#### **Wake Me Up Lord**

*Wake me up Lord, so that the evil of racism  
finds no home within me.  
Keep watch over my heart Lord,  
and remove from me any barriers to your grace,  
that may oppress and offend my brothers and sisters.  
Fill my spirit Lord, so that I may give  
services of justice and peace.  
Clear my mind Lord, and use it for your glory.  
And finally, remind us Lord that you said,  
“blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they shall be called children of God.”  
Amen.*

-U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. This prayer is from *For The Love of One Another* (1989), a special message from the Bishops’ Committee on Black Catholics of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on the Occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of the Pastoral Letter, *Brothers and Sisters to Us*, the U.S. Catholic bishops’ Pastoral Letter on Racism (1979).

## Education

We all have more to learn – and that is particularly true for those of us who are white. There are many lists of recommended resources circulating on social media. We encourage you to check them out, paying special attention to the voices of Black people speaking to their experiences of racism and injustice. Here is a shorter list of some of the things the CVN staff has been reading and listening to lately.

### **The assumption of white privilege and what we can do about it** by Fr. Bryan Massingale

Fr. Bryan Massingale unpacks the assumptions about white privilege that were at play when Amy Cooper called the police on Christian Cooper last week in Central Park. He provides five important things that white people can do to in response to the injustice of racism

### **The American Nightmare** by Ibram X. Kendi

This article from The Atlantic explores viewpoints long-perpetuated by racists and racism-deniers to invalidate the lived experiences of black Americans – and how these viewpoints have bubbled up to the surface in recent weeks via COVID-19, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd.

### **How to Make this Moment the Turning Point for Real Change** by Barack Obama

Obama shares ideas for protest and civic engagement that will help us see an impact.

### **A Decade of Watching Black People Die**, a Code Switch podcast episode

Writer Jamil Smith reads and reflects on an essay he wrote in 2015 and the ways that its ideas continue to be true now. One major takeaway is the idea that perhaps George Floyd’s death has been given more attention than, for example, Breonna Taylor’s because of the normalization of violence against women.

# Action

You have a role to play. There are many different ways to get involved in this work – and they are all desperately needed. Here are a few suggestions.

**Become an Ally** – Once you’ve taken time to analyze your privilege, the next step is to get to work as an ally. Allyship is an active way of life that exercises bridge-building to ensure equality, opportunity, and inclusion for everyone. Check out this TEDx talk from our 2019 keynote speaker, Whitney Parnell “[Allyship is the Key to Social Justice](#)” for a great overview of allyship. You can also take on this work within your program. This article from Medium offers [five ways to be an active ally in the workplace](#).

**Invest in People of Color** – Examine your budget and see how you can make changes to support the livelihoods of people of color. Donate to organizations that have strong commitments to racial justice and equity. Look at who you hire, where you shop, how much you tip – these things all make a difference. Order take out from restaurants owned by people of color in your neighborhood. When shopping for books, consider buying from independent bookstores, especially [Black-owned bookstores](#). Don’t be discouraged if the books you are looking for are out of stock, see if you can buy one on backorder or check out this [list of alternative books on racial justice being recommended by black booksellers](#).

**Speak Out** – If you have not vocalized your beliefs about racial justice, now is the time to do so. If you don’t know what to say, you can start by elevating the words of a person of color on social media. Speak up when you hear someone making racist statements (not sure what to say, but you know you need to say something? Simply try asking the person “Why did you just say that? What did you mean by that?”). Express your views to those in decision-making positions – call your elected officials and your church leaders to ask them to actively stand with you for racial justice. Many feel called to exercise their right to protest this injustice in the streets. If you are unable to do that, check out this (older, but still relevant) resource: [26 ways to be in the struggle when you can’t be in the streets](#).

**Watch** – Have you seen the video of George Floyd’s last moments? Those excruciatingly long eight minutes and forty-six seconds? If you haven’t watched, ask yourself why you have chosen not to. Yes, it is extremely painful to watch, you will never forget what you’ve seen – and that is important. Understanding what really happened during that time is critical in forming your voice for the cause.

Thank you for the work you are doing. If you have resources to help us continue to pray, learn, and act, please share them.

## Related Stories

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Ashley Guanzon

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