

# WAKING UP: Conversations about race for the Passionist Family



During the Fall, The Passionist Solidarity Network offered 4 sessions of “circle” gatherings for the Passionist Family to engage in conversations about racial justice. 33 people registered and participated during impactful 90 minute sessions. Anchored with prayer and reflection, sessions also incorporated spoken word, music and video as we confronted the historical foundations of the culture of whiteness. It was a safe-space for deep listening and speaking our truths. Resource materials between sessions stressed taking small steps toward personal change and action ending with the questions “How do we move forward from here?” “How do we stay in motion?”

*“If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.” Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Following the series, we asked participants if these sessions changed their understanding of racial justice.

*“Yes especially because it is only in the last several years that I have gotten in touch with what it means to be “privileged.” It is a reality and I still need to keep thinking about how this influences my thinking and my attitudes today.”*

*“What helped me most was hearing from more people, especially the Passionist family, about this issue. When we saw the video with the young woman speaking to the looting that occurred, and I heard some of the participants' reaction to it; that helped me look at things differently...in particular, I valued hearing the perspective of those directly affected by the injustice of racism.”*

*“We don't need to demonize, nor bludgeon each other with guilt, but we do need to enter into a crucial conversation, we need to talk about it, because it's pretty clear we have not talked about racism in the past.” (Jack)*

Two members of the Laudato Si Vision Fulfillment team were facilitators of the series, and two others were participants. The intersection between integral ecology and anti racism is at the core of Laudato

Si' which is a call for us to deeply examine our lifestyles, modes of production and consumption and the established structures of power which govern today's societies (*Laudato Si'* #5). Our current arrangements benefit a small segment of mostly white humanity, which consumes a disproportionate share of the planet's resources. Fossil fuel extraction and use causes deep environmental devastation, mining for minerals needed for high-tech devices, mono-cultural agriculture and meat production fall most heavily on people of color. "They are the ones whose lands are devastated by mining. They are the ones who live next door to refineries and power plants. They are the ones whose labor has become superfluous in an economy determined to cut costs at all cost." (*Blog from Sister Karen Donahue SOM*).