



RACIAL RECONCILIATION: HEALING OUR COMMUNITY

Gracious and Loving God,

We thank you for sending your son Jesus to be an example of someone who walked in love and sought peace, even in the hardest circumstances. We ask that you give us eyes to see others in the way that you see them. Give us the ability to forgive one another as you forgive. Help us to love in the same unconditional way that you do.

In Jesus' name, we pray,

Amen.

JULY 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction1

II. Action Plan5

III. Subcommittees, Goals, and Timelines6

IV. Appendices9

INTRODUCTION

Racial Reconciliation at St. Francis Catholic High School

The recent murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd spurred an outpouring of sadness, anger, and grief across the country. Uprisings against racial injustice subsequently occurred in cities, suburbs, and even in rural areas not often in the news. These uprisings represent a struggle larger than the fight for justice for an individual; the protests are a statement about the unequal treatment experienced by Black and African American people in many areas of daily life.

In the weeks after George Floyd's death, many of our students and alumnae felt that we as a school community did not stand in solidarity with them during this painful time. Furthermore, a social media post meant to honor the struggle of our students of color was instead experienced by many as deeply hurtful because it was too little, too late, and not an authentic statement given our actions as a school. Furthermore, the comments on the post were filled with stories of mistreatment; and worse, that we neglected to act to protect our students in the face of this mistreatment.

We are truly sorry for our actions and inactions that failed to affirm and protect the dignity of our students and families of color. Every time we did not address a racial incident; every time we did not adequately respond to the racial mistreatment of students of color; and by failing to proactively create a more inclusive campus environment, we have sinned.

In response to this, the St. Francis administration scheduled two listening sessions to hear directly from our students and alumnae of color about the ways we did not do right by them. A petition was also created by alumnae of color and presented to the St. Francis administration outlining actionable steps we could take to improve the campus climate for students of color. The feedback we have received in many forms were all taken into account for the creation of this action plan.

This action plan represents an effort to repair harm done to our students and families of color, specifically our Black and African American students and families, by members of our school community. We want to acknowledge that the issue of racism affects all racial and ethnic backgrounds; however, this plan specifically addresses the needs of the Black and African American members of our community. Despite this, it is our ultimate goal that the skills gained through the implementation of this action plan are translatable to other marginalized racial and ethnic groups.

We are now reflecting back on what we have learned during these past few months, and seeking direction in our Catholic faith. Therefore, this document is framed around the sacrament of Reconciliation, in which the priest, as the agent of God, forgives sins committed after Baptism, when the sinner is heartily sorry for them, sincerely confesses them, and is willing to make satisfaction for them. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines the Sacrament of Reconciliation as "the sacramental celebration in which, through God's mercy and forgiveness, the sinner is reconciled with God and also with the Church, Christ's Body, which is wounded by sin."

In the USCCB pastoral letter against racism titled "Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call To Love¹," the Bishops state:

To do justice requires an honest acknowledgment of our failures and the restoring of right relationships between us. "If we acknowledge our sins, [God] is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing" (1 Jn 1:9). To love goodness demands pursuing "what leads to peace and to building up one another" (Rom 14:19). It requires a determined effort, but even more so, it requires humility; it requires each of us to ask for the grace needed to overcome this sin and get rid of this scourge. In what follows, we hope to provide a Christian call for all of us in this country to "walk humbly with our God" so that, by his grace, racism will be eradicated (page 8).

As Catholics, we believe that the infinite merits of Jesus Christ can forgive our sins and fortify our souls against future sin as well. We call on that power now to heal our community.

Racial Literacy

Racial literacy² offers a relational approach aimed at honoring the humanity of all those involved in a racial conflict. The purpose of racial literacy is to impart the social and emotional skills required to handle the overwhelming nature of racial interactions. If we cannot tolerate a racial discussion, it will be nearly impossible to engage in racial conflict long enough to resolve it. The overall goal of racial literacy is to promote the health and wellbeing of people from racially marginalized backgrounds whose stories are too often unheard and unseen.

Racial literacy describes a set of social and emotional skills used to address racial stress of any kind. Racial stress overwhelms us in a moment and prevents us

¹ <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/upload/open-wide-our-hearts.pdf>

² See Appendix for important terms and definitions

from acting in accordance to our values. Everyone experiences racial stress; racial stress is a very human reaction in moments where we are uncertain about what to do or say. For white people, racial stress often leads to avoidance of racial issues. Therefore, racial stress falls heaviest on the shoulders of people of color who bear the brunt of racial ignorance, misinformation, and bias. People of color do not have the privilege of avoiding racial issues. Racial literacy gives us a framework for understanding how to manage racial stress, directly address racial conflict, and bring healing to our community. As a Catholic school community, we are called to be stewards of our wellbeing. Therefore, we must do all we can to address racial stress in ways that facilitate healthy coping. This is the key to creating a more inclusive campus culture.

With racial literacy, our primary focus is on bringing about healthy resolution to racial conflict, repairing broken relationships, and creating a stronger community in support of our students and families of color³.

To some, a model that embraces restorative justice may feel like no justice at all. We want to acknowledge that for far too long, racial mistreatment has been glossed over and ignored. Through racial literacy, we introduce a form of accountability rarely seen in organizations—emotional accountability. Everyone will be held accountable for their actions, even though this model does not initially utilize punitive measures. If hurtful behavior towards students and families of color continues despite restorative interventions, more stringent measures are still at our disposal. In other words, confronting the sin of racism is not optional for members of our community. By focusing on the root of the problem of racial ignorance, we hope to create deep, meaningful, and lasting cultural change.

Racism is truly an evil sin. Human beings should have an opportunity to atone for their sins, restore their place in the community, and learn from their mistakes. In fact, those of us who have been through such a process are often the greatest advocates for racial change. Our racial literacy framework gives us the tools to work through shame and blame, and generates a space to care for one another in moments of racial tension and conflict. This can bring healing to everyone involved in a racial conflict.

Our theory of change driving our action plan is as follows:

1. Racism is a sin that negatively affects the mind, bodies, and spirits of our staff, faculty, students, and families
2. Our Catholic faith calls us to conversion and reconciliation to heal the bonds of

³ See “A New Journey: Racial Literacy at St. Francis Catholic High School,” by J. Javier-Watson, *Pax et Bonum*, Winter 2019 (16, 2)

community broken by sin

3. Racism represents an unhealed societal wound that has been passed down and reproduced over many generations
4. Structural change alone will not heal racial trauma
5. Stereotypes/implicit bias drive inequitable treatment of staff, faculty, students, and families of color
6. Racist attitudes can be changed; the tools to overcome racism can be learned
7. A relational approach will lead to both structural change and racial healing for the St. Francis community

ACTION PLAN

Please see our Racial Reconciliation Logic Model for a more detailed explanation of workflow, metrics, and goals that will bring about organizational change.

- I. Racial Reconciliation Committee: Theresa Rogers, President; Elias Mendoza, Principal; Subcommittee heads
- II. Logic Model Organization
 - A. Skills
 1. Our healing model utilizes the sacrament of Reconciliation and racial literacy at its foundation
 2. Conflict negotiation/resolution, honest reflection, the ability to ask for forgiveness, and the willingness to make restitution where possible are all skill sets we need to develop as a community
 - B. Infrastructure
 1. The skills we seek to develop need activities and organizational structures to support them
 2. People are our greatest resource, therefore our plan focuses primarily on leveraging the strengths of our community to develop our plan
 - C. Impact
 1. Our goals must be ambitious yet attainable, conceptual yet measurable
 2. We need guideposts, or metrics, and data collection methods that tell us if we are on the right path
 - D. Accountability
 1. We see accountability as a positive; accountability is about ownership and empowerment rather than a punitive instrument
 2. We will enlist our Black/African American Alumnae Network, other alumnae volunteers, and Creative Label to manage our goals and metrics
- III. Annual Phases
 - A. Phase 1
 1. Year 1: August 2020 - June 2021
 2. Design and Begin Implementation
 - B. Phase 2
 1. Year 2: July 2021 - June 2022
 2. Assess and Realign
 - C. Phase 3
 1. Year 3: July 2023 - June 2024
 2. Reassess and Realign

SUBCOMMITTEES: SCOPE, GOALS, AND TIMELINES

I. Training and Professional Development - Jason Javier-Watson, Assistant Principal

A. Scope

1. Provide training to employees on racial conflict negotiation/resolution skills
2. Manage follow up to ensure training is completed
 - a) One-on-one, peer mentor follow-ups for employees who are absent on training dates
3. Create public report after each phase to document progress

B. Goals and Timelines

1. By Summer 2020 - Plan training curriculum (dates and topics)
2. By Summer 2020 - Kelsey Jones, PhD racial literacy presentation to leadership staff
3. By Fall 2020 - Howard Stevenson, PhD racial literacy presentation to staff and faculty; training module begins

II. Evaluation/Personnel Issues Subcommittee - Sarah Ruano, Director of Data and Assessment

A. Scope

1. Create management and evaluation pathways to ensure both training and accountability around racial issues occurs
2. Update organizational documents to include these changes

B. Goals and Timelines

1. By Summer 2020: Strategy for addressing staff responsible for microaggressions
2. Fall 2020 - Spring 2021: Develop racial literacy evaluation rubric
3. By Fall 2021: Implement racial literacy evaluation rubric in accordance with training and support
4. Create public report after each phase to document progress

III. Curriculum Subcommittee - Christopher Arns, Social Studies Teacher; Kore Zimmerman, Math Teacher

A. Scope

1. Review every scope and sequence currently in place for both racial misinformation as well as gaps in racial knowledge being taught
2. Where gaps and misinformation are identified, offer revisions

B. Goals and Timelines

1. Summer 2020 - Spring 2021: Curriculum audit across subject areas to ensure topics adequately address students from marginalized backgrounds' concerns

2. By Fall 2021: Revise scope and sequences
 3. Create public report after each phase to document progress
- IV. Equitable Discipline & Restorative Justice - Cynthia Cost, Dean of Students**
- A. Scope
 1. Find and complete training in conflict mediation/restorative justice for discipline and wellness staff
 2. Create a mediation protocol to resolve racial conflicts between students
 3. Create a restorative justice protocol to handle wider discipline issues within the school
 - B. Goals and Timelines
 1. By Fall 2020 - Strategy for addressing students responsible for microaggressions
 2. Fall 2020 - Spring 2021: Plan and enact restorative justice approach for dealing with racial conflict
 3. Create public report after each phase to document progress
- V. Celebrating Ethnicities and Cultures Subcommittee - Cassy McGreevy, Student Activities Director**
- A. Scope
 1. Create student-led opportunities for SBO's, student leadership, and wider student community to express racial and cultural difference
 2. Identify areas of need for campus-wide student programming
 - B. Goals and Timelines
 1. By Fall 2020: SBO's plan celebrations for diverse ethnic perspectives and important cultural dates
 2. By Fall 2020: Plan Student-led programming
 3. By Fall 2020: Spring 2021: Racial literacy woven into the fabric of Leadership Class
 4. By Spring 2021: Create an SBO position responsible for addressing racial/ethnic diversity on campus
 5. Create public report after each phase to document progress
- VI. Scholarship Subcommittee - Tara Leung, Director of Finance**
- A. Scope
 1. Examine all policies and procedures related to support for financially struggling families of color
 - B. Goals and Timelines
 1. By Fall 2020: Explore ways to better support financially struggling students of color
 2. Spring 2021 - Fall 2021: Create new scholarship(s) for a Black/African American student(s)

3. Create public report after each phase to document progress

VII. Hiring Subcommittee - Gina Vinella, Human Resources Business Partner

A. Scope

1. Establish relationships with minority-serving organizations to increase number of Black/African American faculty candidates
2. Utilize alumnae networks to identify Black/African American faculty candidates

B. Goals and Timelines

1. By December 2020: Formalize outreach to Black/African American Alumnae network
2. By Fall 2022: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion coordinator
3. By Spring 2022: Hiring rate of Black/African American teachers matches wider Sacramento area Black/African American demographic data
4. Create public report after each phase to document progress

VIII. Black/African American Parent Group - Margo Scott, Parent of current student

A. Scope

1. Provide a space for Black/African American parents to socialize, network, and problem solve

B. Goals and Timelines

1. By Fall 2020: Establish budget and scope for years 1 & 2
2. By Spring 2020: Generate network of current Black/African American parents as well as Black/African American alumnae parents
3. Create public report after each phase to document progress

IX. Black/African American Alumnae Group - Natalie Allen, Class of 2010

A. Scope

1. Establish a formal alumnae group to serve as a resource for students of color on a variety of topics
2. Create programming relevant to Black/African American student advancement

B. Goals and Timelines

1. By Fall 2020: Formalize group by collecting contact information
2. By December 2020: Hold planning meeting
3. By December 2020: Plan and calendar relevant Black/African American Alumnae events
4. By Spring 2020: Attain 20 active members
5. By Spring 2020: Host one event in the early spring semester
6. Create public report after each phase to document progress

APPENDIX

Important Terms and Definitions

Racial literacy: the ability to read, recast (lower stress), and resolve racially stressful encounters.⁴

Racial stress: “Race-related transactions between individuals or groups and their environment that emerge from the dynamics of racism, and that are perceived to tax or exceed existing individual and collective resources or threaten well-being.”⁵

Racial socialization: The explicit and implicit ways parents, schools, institutions, and society at large teach children about who they are and what their racial identity means in the world.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Jason Javier-Watson received his doctorate in Reading, Writing, and Literacy from the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, where he also completed a postdoctoral fellowship working with the Racial Empowerment Collaborative and the Department of Human Development and Quantitative Methods. During his postdoctoral fellowship Dr. Javier-Watson facilitated hundreds of hours of research and training on racial literacy to over 1,000 educators, mental health professionals, non-profit sector employees, and police officers. He holds bachelor of art degrees in Sociology and Spanish from the University of Kansas and a master’s degree in Secondary Education from the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Javier-Watson is currently the assistant principal of 9th and 10th grades at St. Francis Catholic High School. He is the chair of the Student Life Council and moderator for the Racial Justice League, a student-led club. Dr. Javier-Watson also participates as a member of the Diocese of Sacramento Anti-Racism Taskforce, and leads St. Francis’s Racial Reconciliation Initiative in response to the racial uprisings of the summer 2020.

⁴ *Promoting Racial Literacy in Schools: Differences that Make a Difference*, Howard C. Stevenson, PhD

⁵ “A multidimensional conceptualization of racism-related stress: Implications for the well-being of people of color,” SP Harrell, PhD: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/10702849/>