

In Brief

Excerpt from the UNY Conference Commission on Religion and Race (CCORR) Statement on recent racial violence and subsequent demonstrations

By UNY CCORR

Editor's Note: Earlier this month, the UNY CCORR made a statement in response to the recent killings of three black Americans by police officers: Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd. Below is an excerpt of their eye-opening statement. To read the full article, which includes resources that can help you and people you know to eradicate the injustice of racism, visit <https://bit.ly/UNYCCORRJune2020>.



Acts 1:8 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

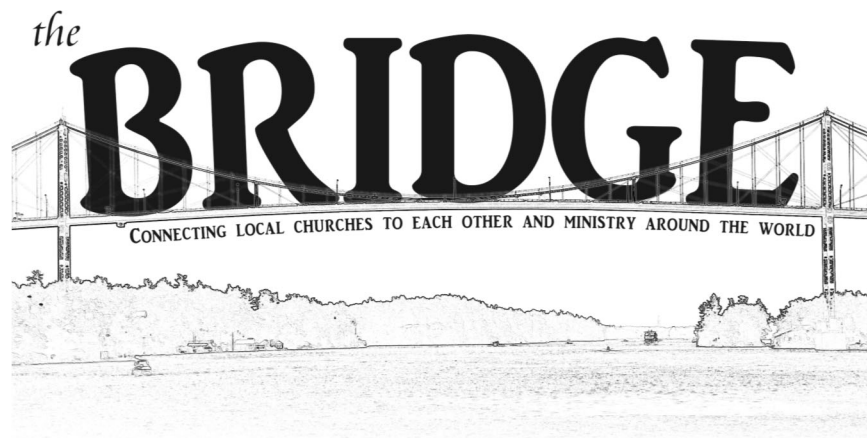
Amid the ongoing challenge of a pandemic that manifests several examples of racial inequities in our society, a wave of high-profile incidents of racial violence has challenged us in new ways. The killing of Ahmaud Arbery on Feb. 23 received national attention following the release of a video of his killing on May 5. Breonna Taylor was killed in her home as police executed a search warrant on March 13. While still reeling from these events, the world witnessed the killing of George Floyd. Many of us have seen the video of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin pressing his knee into Mr. Floyd's neck. It is difficult not to be outraged at the extreme cruelty of performing such an act for almost nine minutes as Mr. Floyd indicated his distress.

It is still easy for some to focus only on the individuals who took these innocent black lives as bad people acting on their personal prejudices. However, these deaths represent more than a few bad apples among us. They are the result of a white supremacist system that dehumanizes people of color. Part of that narrative includes labeling black and brown people as violent and criminal. These beliefs have fed both implicit and explicit biases, leading to a variety of injustices, including incidents of police brutality.

The Bridge is a Conference Communications Ministry tool that delivers to local churches news and stories of ministry from around the Upper New York Conference and the world. For more news and stories visit:

www.unyumc.org

Curious about what the online worship experiences are in Upper New York? Visit the Conference website for a full list of what is available at <http://www.unyumc.org/about/find-an-online-worship-services>.



The Upper New York Conference's vision is to live the gospel of Jesus Christ and to be God's love with our neighbors in all places.

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Rev. Dibelius shares about the Examen spiritual practice

Editor's Note: Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, Upper New York Assistant Director of Vital Congregations for Spiritual Life, the Rev. Nancy Dibelius, has been providing videos of helpful spiritual practices to help deepen people's relationship to God during this difficult time.

One of the spiritual practices she delved deeply into is known as the Examen, this helps you to recognize God moments in your life. In order to reach people, who may not have access to videos, we have asked Rev. Dibelius to write a guide for the Examen spiritual practice for people to read.

The Examen is a highly structured practice that originated with Ignatius of Loyola in the 16th century; for those of you not familiar with Ignatius, he was the founder of The Society of Jesus which later became known as the Jesuits. The practice has two specific steps. The first step is known as the Examen of Consciousness; the second step is known as the Examen of Conscience. The intent of this practice is to notice the ways in which God has been present in your life to help you become more sensitive to those moments and more aware of the invitation God may have for you in those moments. As you focus your attention on the "God moments" in your life, you will become more aware of those moments as they are occurring and more present to God in all of your life.

The First Step-Examen of Consciousness

In the first step, you will focus on your awareness of God throughout your life; do you recognize God in the moment? As you become aware, reflecting

back, of the moments that you did not recognize God, what was happening within you at that time? How was that different from the times you were aware of God?

The first step of this practice is to choose a period of time starting with the present moment and moving backwards through the time period. It is easiest to begin this practice with a relatively short period of time; I would suggest starting with 24 hours.

Quiet yourself and take a few deep breaths. Close your eyes and take a few moments to appreciate the silence. Invite God to be present with you. Look back over the last 24 hours beginning with the present moment; let each hour gently pass by your awareness, pause between each hour. As you move backwards, try to notice the presence of God in the day and your own way of participating in, missing, or resisting God's presence. Then ask yourself: What am I noticing that I have taken for granted during the time period? What feelings and thoughts are emerging?

When you are ready, journal about your insights noting what happened (or didn't happen) at specific times of which you are now aware but were not at the time.

The Second Step-Examen of Conscience

The second step is known as the Examen of Conscience and is a time of prayerfulness when you place the moments you became aware of in step one before God. There are five movements to this prayer time.

First I would invite you to enter into prayerful space. Then move through the steps as follows:



The first act is acknowledgement and gratitude; recall all the blessings you have received over the time period; acknowledge those blessings as gifts from God and give thanks.

The next act is petition; pray for the grace to see yourself clearly and honestly (your true authentic self); pray for clear vision to see yourself as God sees you and as others see you; empty yourself of self to make space for God.

Then admit; consider the times in the period when you have lapsed in faith, resisted God's action, or become alienated from God; recognize a specific area of your life that needs healing or attention.

Next repent; humble yourself and ask for forgiveness, say to God "I'm sorry"

And finally resolve to accept God's grace and love. Determine now, with God, to be open to new ways of being in the world, to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

When you have completed the practice, journal about your feelings and insights noting, in particular, what needs attention and what you need to entrust to God's care.

Visit <https://vimeo.com/411440154> for a video of Rev. Dibelius giving instructions for the first step of the Examen.

Visit <https://vimeo.com/413595721> for a video of Rev. Dibelius giving instructions for the second step of the Examen.