

White mothers, we need to talk...

*Until the killing of Black men, black mothers' sons
Is as important as the killing of white men, white mothers' sons,
We who believe in freedom cannot rest.*
"Ella's Song", Bernice Johnson Reagon

On Mother's Day we would pause to honor Black mothers who, like Mary, grieve sons taken by state violence. But as white mothers, we've yet to find a way to talk about the dehumanizing effect of racism on all of our children. When a Black youth is killed by a white officer, a Black mother grieves at a graveside and a white mother loses a piece of her soul, forced to acknowledge the evil made manifest in her offspring or share silent complicity. We grieve openly as Mary or we weep in shame as Pilate's mother.

We come on Mother's Day because in it's founding Mother's Day was a white mother's call to action.

We come to you at church because the role of the church has come into focus throughout these past nine months of liturgical silence.

We come to you with an invitation to join us in demanding an end to the systemic oppression wrought by white supremacy in our nation, our schools, and (yes) our churches. Aware that racism is both a social and legal construct designed by whites to protect assets; dismantling racism must include a commitment by white folk to discredit America's original sin.

As mothers, we ask you to:

- ❖ Educate yourself and your family about racism. One such opportunity is the Witnessing Whiteness book group offered by the YWCA (ahunter@ywcastlouis.org)
- ❖ Explicitly teach your children about racism. The SURJ Mother's Day kit is a helpful resource
- ❖ Ask your church to explore its social teachings and read the liberation theologians in your tradition
- ❖ Care for children of color in schools as if they were your own. Ask about children of color re: gifted programs & honors coursework
- ❖ Address racist practices, comments, and jokes, no matter how subtle. Notice the intersections of patriarchy, capitalism and white supremacy and dare to speak them aloud
- ❖ Support #BlackLivesMatter, join the movement!

As mothers who believe in Jesus' teaching that calls us to love one another, we proclaim that "Black Lives Matter". Please help us help our children.



Offended by "Black Lives Matter"?

Pause and listen radically to the root of the message from its source, people of color.

Listen to people of color for their experience of racism.

Ask ourselves:

- *Why would people feel compelled to convince you that their life matters?*
- *How might a person of color be feeling?*
- *What makes this message necessary to the holders?*
- *Ask, don't Black Lives also Matter to you?*

Remember, caring about Black Lives does not mean you care less about other lives.



This action is inspired by the work of MAU, #blackchurch & #blackshul. We're coming to you silently on Mother's Day as its origins were radical activism, not superficial idolatry.

Because #BlackLivesMatter we have #WhiteFolkWork to do.

#ReclaimMothersDay #EllasSong