



13

actions you can take to advance social justice

1. Know your elected officials and their positions on the issues.

You can find out your federal and state elected officials at mdelect.net if you live in Maryland. You should be able to find out your city/county elected officials by looking them up on your city/county council websites. Research their positions: what bills have they sponsored? How have they voted on issues? **Save their phone numbers in your phone and their email addresses in your contacts.** This will make it easy to contact them quickly and often.

2. Write your state elected officials and ask them how they are going to prioritize police, criminal justice, and systemic reforms in the upcoming legislative session.

The Maryland legislative session runs January to April every year. You can follow the bills are under consideration and watch hearings at the [Maryland General Assembly's Website](http://MarylandGeneralAssembly.org). Reach out to your senators and delegates and tell them what issues are important to you and why, and let them know what you want them to do!

3. Work to create a parish or organization where diversity of all kinds is celebrated, inclusion is practiced and discussed, and equity exists at both the interpersonal and organizational levels.

The Episcopal Church has a really useful resource to help parishes on their journey. The anti-racism training manual, "Seeing the Face of God in Each Other," provides congregations with tools for self-reflection, assessment, and growth. Contact Sarah McIlvried at smcilvried@cc-md.org if you would like to access the toolkit for your parish.

4. Learn about your city's or county's use-of-force policy.

You can find most policies by going to 8cantwait.org. Data demonstrates that if cities adopt the eight reforms to their use-of-force policies, police violence decreases by 72 percent. Learn which of the eight your city has implemented already – and where they have failed to improve – and reach out to your mayor, county executive, and local legislative council to demand changes.

5. Sign petitions to demand changes.

Change.org has several petitions to end white supremacy and systemic racism, including the largest signed petition the site has ever hosted, [Justice for George Floyd](#).

6. Donate to the Juneteenth and Father's Day Bailout.

[Out4Justice](#), [Job Opportunities Task Force](#), and [BALT \(Baltimore Action Legal Team\)](#) have created funds to post bail for individuals currently incarcerated due to unaffordable bail.

7. Follow the advocacy efforts of Catholic Charities of Baltimore and Catholic Charities USA.

[Catholic Charities' advocacy team](#) will post updates about legislative priorities in Maryland that affect the most vulnerable of our neighbors. Visit [CCUSA's advocacy page](#) for national legislative updates, policy briefs, and action alerts!

8. Watch documentaries and media that explain the history of racism and the brokenness of current systems.

Some suggestions to get you started are "13th," "Just Mercy," and "When They See Us" (all on Netflix). Catholic Charities also has "Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity" on DVD, available for borrowing.

9. Read books about white supremacy, systemic racism and other forms of oppression.

There are many books on these topics and many lists online. "How to be an Anti-Racist," "The New Jim Crow," "The Color of Law," and "Not in My Neighborhood: How Bigotry Shaped a Great American City" are just a few that are highly recommended. Consider hosting book club discussions with friends or at your parish

10. Create signs, artwork, and other materials that recognize the lives we lost, and affirm the lives of our community.

Make your own Black Lives Matter sign that you can put in your window or in front of your house. Being creative can be healing, and you can use what you make for rallies, or just to add some affirmations to your own surroundings.

11. Attend events, rallies, demonstrations, book clubs and other forums on ending racism.

These can be virtual or in-person events as you feel comfortable and are able to do (no one should put their health at risk). If you are going to a protest, make sure you know who is organizing it, what their demands are, and what the expectations are.

12. Acknowledge the indigenous land you are living on.

The land we work, live, study, pray and play on was sacred space for the indigenous people and tribes who occupied this land. Find out which indigenous cultures evolved from the land we are on [by following this link](#), and then research if and what local activism those groups are doing and how you can support.

13. Vote.

Voting is an important way to make changes. Learn who the candidates are, read up on their positions, and write to them asking what they plan to do in office to address issues you care about. Go to a debate and ask them how they plan to make reforms to our criminal justice system. Then vote!

For more ideas or support, contact Parish Social Ministry. Write to Sarah McIlvried at smcilmvried@cc-md.org.