

Reflective Writing Activity: Confronting Historical Racism and Catholic Social Justice

Choose one of the following questions to respond to in a written reflection.

1. The documentary, *Sisters of Selma*, captures painful and disturbing moments of racism during the Civil Rights Movement. Watching such footage can be difficult - especially when it reveals the depth of hatred and injustice that people of color experienced.
 - What do you think historians should consider when analyzing and presenting footage like this that depicts racism so directly? What steps or strategies can they take to ensure the material is handled thoughtfully, both for public audiences and for the communities most affected by this history?

2. What specific scenes or moments from the film stood out to you emotionally or intellectually? How did these moments shape your understanding of the role of Catholic Sisters in the Civil Rights Movement?

3. Explore some modern Catholic social justice initiatives in St. Louis (choose from the options below and/or look up others you might already know about). How do the goals and actions of these initiatives compare with the goals of the clergy who participated in the Selma March? What continuities or changes do you see in how Catholic organizations engage with social justice today? Do you think initiatives focused on congregations' history of enslavement are sufficient to address the historical and ongoing challenges of racial inequality in St. Louis?
 - The Slavery, History, Memory, and Reconciliation (SHMR) Project
 - The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet ("Justice" tab)
 - The Society of the Sacred Heart ("Enslavement" and "Justice tabs")
 - The Peace and Justice Commission (formerly Catholic Action Network for Social Justice)