

Holy Week and Holy Work: A Lenten Exercise for White People Working against White Supremacy

Amanda Udis-Kessler, June 26, 2021

It is possible for white people to acknowledge both the power and the harm of white supremacy and white privilege as a Lenten discipline. For people who choose this discipline, Holy Week offers the opportunity for deep reflection, meditation and prayer.

Working against white supremacy as a white person means wrestling with some of the themes of Holy Week:

- Discomfort
- Humility
- Taking risks
- Putting one's body on the line
- Being vulnerable
- Making sacrifices
- Surrendering privilege and power
- Resisting temptation
- Accepting the death that precedes resurrection.

I invite you to consider how these themes might play out in your own life as you seek to commit more fully to working against white supremacy as a white person, particularly during Holy Week.

How does working against white supremacy as a white person:

- Force you to engage with discomfort?
- Demand humility of you?
- Call you to take risks? (What kinds of risks might you be called to take?)
- Invite you to put your body on the line?
- Require you to be vulnerable without being defensive, resentful, or fragile?
- Call you to make sacrifices? (What kinds of sacrifices might you be called to make?)
- Ask you to surrender privilege and power?
- Invite you to resist temptation? (What kinds of temptations might you need to resist?)

To what do you need to die in order to work against white supremacy effectively as a white person? What do you need to let go of or jettison? What is keeping you from doing effective work in support of the struggle against white supremacy?

These questions began as a supplemental exercise for a church group working with the United Church of Christ curriculum "White Privilege: Let's Talk." My thanks to Rev. Jessica Petersen-Mutai for reviewing my initial draft.

If you work with these questions, I would love to hear how that work goes for you. Feel free to contact me at amanda@amandaudiskessler.com.