



Taizé - Pilgrimage of Trust in St. Louis

What is a pilgrimage of trust?

You are invited in the coming months to be part of a series of conversations on trust. These conversations are not for “experts.” You are invited to join in wherever you may be at, even if you have no past experience in these matters or have never talked about these things before. These conversations are for you if you realize that things have to change, that the divisions in society are impoverishing us all and healing cannot be put off until tomorrow.

These conversations will neither focus exclusively on racial divides nor avoid their obvious impact on the mistrust that is prevalent in St. Louis and in so many other parts of our country. We want to make friends by listening to each other and discovering where the others are coming from. As we talk together, we may come to realize that not all of our experiences are universal. It may take time to see how and why others experience reality in a different way. One of the great church leaders of the 21st century once said: “The basis of trust is some kind of recognition that the other person’s presence, the other person’s needs are real.” Yes, the Spirit of God grounds us in reality, opens our eyes to what is real, prevents us from running away from what is in front of our noses. And the Spirit connects us, instilling in us the confidence that we cannot become fully human without each other. When we search together, we are already on the road to healing.

To be part of this pilgrimage means being willing to leave our comfort zone in order to reach out to others in ways that are creative. In so doing we create a space where we are able to wrestle with our frustrations, questions and hopes, and where we are led to acknowledge, humbly and prayerfully, that none of us has all the answers. As a member of our preparation team put it, “We’re trying to figure things out together, trusting in God’s will that together we will discover the challenges and struggles and oppressions and find ways forward, but that it will take each and every one of us. None of us can just sit back and not reach out to other people.” And we believe that true dialogue leads to a readiness to act and allows new possibilities to arise.

Reflecting on this Pilgrimage of Trust we are undertaking together in St. Louis, the Reverend Starsky Wilson, Co-Chair of the Ferguson commission, said: “Is this about individual walks and journeys, and spiritual practices? Yes. Is this about systemic oppression? Yes. And our prayers must be thoughtful enough, we must be open enough to engage both of these realities. Yes, we are praying for the healing of hearts and minds, but we are also praying for broken systems and a divided city which requires systemic shifts in order for there to be changes.”