

# Breaking the Silence:

## Conversations about Racism, Power and Privilege within Ourselves and Our Province

A workshop with Sisters Patricia Chappell and Ann Louis Nadeau SNDdeN

Arlene Flaherty OP  
JPIC Director

On September 11, 2021, the Dismantling Racism Committee along with Adjunct members gathered at NDP to participate in a workshop entitled Breaking the Silence: Conversations about Racism, Power and Privilege Within ourselves and our Province. The all-day workshop was facilitated by Notre Dame de Namur Sisters, Patricia Chappell, and Ann-Louise Nadeau.



Associate Libby Keady, who co-chairs the committee with Sister Eileen Reilly, established the tone for the workshop by reminding us all that the land upon which we were gathering for the workshop was once the home of Indigenous People. This same land also became part of the vast Ridgely Family Plantation which, at any given time, enslaved about 300 humans from Africa. Libby reminded us all that these are the people who have come before us in this space—people who have labored, loved, and lived on the land that is now NDP. She led us in a moment of silence and remembrance of those who inhabited the land where we now

gathered to consider the work of dismantling racism.

The purpose of the dismantling workshop was to provide the province committee with an overview of the multi-layered and complex realities that construct racism today. The facilitators not only helped us to understand what racism is, but also how we consciously and unconsciously participate in it.



In the course of our workshop, we considered the SSND documents which provide us with principles, values, and a tradition to draw upon as our work goes forward. The workshop also provided us with opportunities to reflect on how religious systems have – and continue to – participate in racism, as well as how SSND has been impacted by racism then and now. We considered the worldview that needs to be challenged and transformed if racism is to be eliminated. We also considered how alternative worldviews and values can be effective in bringing about the dismantling of racism in our lives, communities, and societies. This work helped us to begin to imagine what some next steps in the committee’s planning could look like.



Those who participated in the workshop will, in the weeks following the workshop, be debriefing the experience as we consider how this workshop model can be used to advance the wider province work to dismantle racism.

