

Sister Clare Carter on the purpose of the Interfaith Pilgrimage of the Middle Passage

“Culturally we frame the race issue as a— as a black problem, or a people-of-color problem. And of course the opposite is true. I mean, it’s all of our problem. But the—the origin is with people of European descent, and we conveniently .. throw off our—our responsibility at every level, generation after generation. And the culture functions to reinforce that thinking, just constantly. And so I realized that’s— that is very much the force, I think, that really is keeping it in place, the fact that white folks .. just remain feeling like it has nothing to do with us, when it has everything in the world to do with us. On this walk, we learned so much, and everything you learn just takes your breath away – it is never spoken of.

And I thought walking, in—in the case of the history of the enslavement of African people in the Americas, if we walk this history, if we walk this history, at least for white people, this is a— I mean, the truth shall make us free. You know. And whether it’s painful or something we feel we can’t face, or however distressing, and whatever we might feel, or whatever resistance we have, we have to take this step. I mean, we have to. And I was hoping and praying this would be the beginning of—of sort of literally opening up a spiritual force, a movement that will keep going in many, many ways, and keep awakening white folks up, including myself. And that I—I felt, the more we get in touch with the truth of history, that that in itself, we will find ... within our own souls what we are supposed to do. But we can’t be a shallow awakening, you know. So that’s why we have to take time. We have to walk. We have to get in, you know, as much as we can, and—and dissolve the patterns of denial which are quite deeply entrenched, and—and I realize, have been entrenched for centuries.”