



0-1: "The famous night." Photo illustration by Slate

## Viewing Guide: *One Night in Miami* (2020)

Characters: revolutionary Malcolm X (played by Kingsley Ben-Adir), singer-songwriter Sam Cooke (Leslie Odom Jr.), athlete and actor Jim Brown (Aldis Hodge), and fighter Cassius Clay (later known as Muhammad Ali, and played by Eli Goree)

Stories told on-screen and in print let us explore who we are and help us imagine who we would like to be. *One Night in Miami*, in particular, offers us a way to conceive of myriad ways we might each be gifted, called, and/ or challenged to accept God's invitation to advance civil rights and racial justice.

To that end, we offer the following prompts, to help you watch the film. We won't collect these, and you don't need to "answer" all—or any—of these questions. Just consider this a tool to help you feel prepared to share and participate in our February conversation.

- 1) *One Night in Miami* brings together real-life figures from Black history. Choose one primary character who you will "follow" throughout the film. Name him here:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) What did you know about the real histories of the character you are following in the film before watching it? How did you know this?

- 3) Keeping what you think you know to be historically true from how writer Kemp Powers and director Regina King represent Brown, Clay, Cooke, and X in the film:
- a. What are the motivations and goals for each *character* you are following?
  - b. How do their actions play into their goals?
  - c. How do you think their goals and actions are portrayed as serving and/ or *not* serving the US Civil Rights Movement?
- 4) Brown, Clay, Cooke, and X were all significant celebrities during the period in which the film is set, and did actually meet the night after Clay's legendary fight. (More [here](#) about the actual night, and [here](#) about why Kemp was inspired to create an entirely fictional evening of conversation between these four figures)
- a. What do you think this imagined encounter suggests about how we can, should, and/ or do approach racial justice today?
  - b. What do you think this invented encounter suggests about the role of friendships and community in building racial justice today?

- 5) How does viewing and discussing *One Night in Miami* help you think about how we can continue to empower and motivate each other as individuals, and as a parish community, to continue the anti-racist work we committed to after George Floyd? **What might we do this month? This Lent? This year?**
- a. [Psalm 139: 1-6](#) explains that each of us has been “wonderfully made;” and when God appoints the prophet Jeremiah, we hear how this entails God knitting each of us “in the womb,” and “set[ting us] apart” with distinct aptitudes and callings (see [Jeremiah 1:5](#)). **What unique talents, abilities, and material resources do you feel God has endowed you with, to help combat racism today?**
  - b. In [Romans 12: 4-8](#), Paul describes the Church as “one body in Christ,” composed of “many members,” who “do not all have the same function”. **Do you feel that our Catholic faith and Church encourages and concretely supports you in making the best use of your unique aptitudes and position to combat racism today? Why or why not?**
    - i. To help you think about this, you might recall how In the film and real life, Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali (né Cassius Clay) converted to Islam in part because White Christian opposition to ending US segregation helped render Islam a more dependable spiritual home (read [here](#) about X later publicly announcing his break from the Nation of Islam, and how this deeply offended Ali).
  - c. In [Galatians 6: 1-8](#), Paul tells the early Christian community that, “if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.” He also instructs, “Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” **How can we continue to hold ourselves and each other responsible to the commitment to be anti-racist individuals and an anti-racist Church, beyond the racial reckoning that ensued after the killing of George Floyd in 2020?**
    - i. To help you think about this, you might recall how the characters in the film invite each other to reflect and reconsider how they are engaging in the Civil Rights Movement. Were there moments that you felt really modeled or individual and community accountability? On the contrary, were there moments that you felt demonstrated how *not* to “bear one another’s burdens”? Which? And why?
  - d. In 1979, the U.S. Catholic Bishops issued a “[Pastoral Letter on Racism](#),” and powerfully declared racism as a sin, and that, “Movement toward authentic justice demands a simultaneous attack on both evils [racism and economic injustice.” How would you “grade” the U.S. Church on how well we have addressed racism and economic injustice since then? **What do you think that our Church—and St. Ignatius Parish, specifically—can/should do to answer the call to attend to these who suffer racial injustice today?**