

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 21, 2020, 11:00 AM

CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT BROWN
MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, Brown Memorial. First I want to give honor to God, without him this day would not be possible. And a deep thanks to Reverend Miller, as you approach 20 years, leading this wonderful church. I've known you a long, long time and I just want to say thank you for all you do for the church, all you do for the community and all the help you have provided the City of New York. I'm learning everyday both the things that we need to do better, missed opportunities of the past but also the extraordinary moment that we are in now and where it could take us. A moment of transformation, a historical moment. Maybe it is based in pain, birthed in pain, but it is real. One of these moments of transformation comes around very, very infrequently and yet we are living in the middle of it. A generation of us, as citizens and the leaders among us, we have the chance to forge something new.

We see it even in the last few days what our colleagues in Albany did. Ending a law that kept us from having the transparency and the accountability that our police forces should have and police officers should have. A law that seemed like it was going to be in place forever, it's gone now. That 50-a law, repealed so now we can actually show the people of this city, exactly what's happening with the disciplinary process inside the NYPD. The fact that we are going to shift money from the NYPD to Youth Services and Social Services, going to the root cause of so many challenges. That might have been something that seemed impossible in the past, it's going to happen right now.

And beyond that, the chance we have to rethink the entire equation. Look, for so many generations, if I said the words City Hall, if I said the word NYPD, I don't think people necessarily assumed those institutions were on your side. And that's unacceptable in a democracy, but it's a blunt truth and it's still too true to this day. We need to get to the root of that. That's why we are doing something in New York City that's never been done before in this country. We are naming a City commission, a Racial Justice and Reconciliation – just like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. That got to the whole impact that apartheid had on that society, and then talked about everything and acted on everything that needed to be different. Well that's what we are going to do here in New York City.

We are going to systematically look at the history of racism in this city, the way it lives today, the structural and institutional reality of racism. The way it surrounds us and pervades our life and holds back people of color in every conceivable way, whether it's housing or employment or just the life you live walking down the street. It can change, it must change, it begins with that recognition. And we are going to use that commission to get at some larger truths about how people can actually get what they deserve like the affordable housing that Reverend Miller has fought for so consistently. How do we tell the truth about gentrification? About people being

forced out of the communities they've built and how do we change that? This commission is going to go to the heart of the matter, out in the open, where we need to be.

So, everyone, I just want to say thank you for the chance to be with you. A very, very happy Father's Day to all the dads, to all the families celebrating. To all the families who have gone through loss, my condolences and my hope for healing and a path ahead where you can feel comfort. And everyone we are lord knows, in this together but we will find a path ahead in this city. We have it in us to get to someplace much, much better. We will not let this moment pass us by. Thank you and God bless you all.

###