**Prayer Service for Racial Reconciliation**

*“We cannot have reconciliation without repentance. We cannot have repentance without confession.”-* Jemar Tisby, *The Color of Compromise*

We gather today to pray for those members of the Body of Christ who have been affected by the sin of racism, both systemic and personal.

We gather to offer to the Lord all of the hurts that need healing and all of the injustice that needs mercy.

We gather to pray for all members of our society that are wrongfully oppressed that they may receive justice.

We gather to pray for our Church leaders that they may have the courage to stand up and preach against the sin of racism.

We pray for all our elected officials to stand up for the rights and lives of their citizens.

We pray for educators to do what they can to bring about a better tomorrow by teaching all children to stand up for each other.

We pray for the domestic church, our families, to be strengthened and boldly proclaim the love of Christ that surpasses all else.

We gather to pray for ourselves to be brought into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and let all of our compassion, joy, and peace come from our understanding of his love for us.

We gather as the Church of Jesus Christ to work for peace.

In a special way today on August 28th we commemorate the feast day of St. Moses the Black. A monk from the 4th century who witnesses to us deep conversion and a peaceful way forward. We also commemorate this day in history almost 60 years ago of the March on Washington. In which Martin Luther King Jr. Presented our nation with an honest look at racial inequality and offered his vision for the future of our nation.

“What is needed, and what we are calling for, is a genuine conversion of heart, a conversion that will compel change, and the reform of our institutions and society. Conversion is a long road to travel for the individual. Moving our nation to a full realization of the promise of liberty, equality, and justice for all is even more challenging. However, in Christ we can find the strength and the grace necessary to make that journey.” -United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

**Opening Song:**

**I’ve Got Peace Like a River-Congressional Praise Song**

### Verse 1

I've got peace like a river
I've got peace like a river
I've got peace like a river in my soul
I've got peace like a river
I've got peace like a river
I've got peace like a river in my soul

### Verse 2

I've got joy like a fountain
I've got joy like a fountain
I've got joy like a fountain in my soul
I've got joy like a fountain
I've got joy like a fountain
I've got joy like a fountain in my soul

### Verse 3

I've got love like an ocean
I've got love like an ocean
I've got love like an ocean in my soul

I've got love like an ocean
I've got love like an ocean
I've got love like an ocean in my soul

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**You Speak- Audrey Assad**

### Verse 1

You liberate me from my own noise and my own chaos
From the chains of a lesser law. You set me free X2

### Chorus

In the silence of the heart You speak
In the silence of the heart You speak
and it is there that I will know You
and You will know me
in the silence of the heart
You speak You speak

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**Gospel Reading:**

**Matthew 5: 3-16**

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,[\*](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/matthew/5#48005010-1) for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because of me.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

“You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden.

Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house.

Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.”

**St. Moses the Black Prayer**

### Leader:

En route to great stature in grace, you travelled the path of lowliness, seeking counsel in all matters concerning spiritual life. Burying the instructions of the Fathers deep within your heart you always sang to God: Alleluia!

As you possessed self-knowledge and then ascended to wisdom on high, many seekers came to you for spiritual guidance. With a pure mind you taught in simplicity, revealing hidden truths to all who would listen. Help us now to understand and do God’s will in our lives as we call upon you:

### Response:

Rejoice, you who taught with power and not empty words.
Rejoice, for your mind was renewed by prayer of the heart.
Rejoice, island of refuge for those sinking in the sea of temptation.
Rejoice, wellspring gushing forth with the words of life.
Rejoice, for the house of your soul was not built on the sand of worldly knowledge but on the rock of Christ’s commandments.
Rejoice, holy Elder Moses, righteous teacher of true spiritual wisdom.

### Leader:

Wishing to save the world, the Saviour of all has sent a brilliant star to shine upon those lost in darkness. Seeing your life as a light in the night, teaching, enlightening, and guiding us, we cry out to God: Alleluia!

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You are a saving hand, O Father Moses, pulling up all who are drowning in a world of hate and confusion. Reaching out to you, we ask for guidance in this life of trials and temptations. Ever hoping in God’s mercy we cry out in faith:

Response:

Rejoice, uplifter of the downtrodden.
Rejoice, guardian of the soul in despair.
Rejoice, consolation of those who weep.
Rejoice, calm harbor for those tossed on the waves of this life.
Rejoice, redemptive sufferer.
Rejoice, you who lead us to seek the peace that surpasses all understanding.
Rejoice, holy elder Moses, righteous teacher of true spiritual wisdom!

**Particularly for allies of racial justice (those who are not people of color) we pray the litany of humility**

**I shall not want- Audrey Assad**

### Verse 1

From the love of my own comfort
From the fear of having nothing
From a life of worldly passions
Deliver me O God

### Verse 2

From the need to be understood
And from a need to be accepted
From the fear of being lonely
Deliver me O God
Deliver me O God

### Chorus 1

And I shall not want
No I shall not want
When I taste Your goodness
I shall not want
When I taste Your goodness
I shall not want

### Verse 3

From the fear of serving others
Oh and from the fear of death or trial
And from the fear of humility
Deliver me O God
Yes deliver me O God

### Chorus 2

And I shall not want
No I shall not want
When I taste Your goodness
I shall not want

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**An Individual Racial Awareness Ignatian Examen (Written for People of All Races)**

*This examen is, in part, based on the thoughts of Ibram X. Kendi, PhD, professor and author, from his book “How to be an Anti-racist.” It is not for the purpose of looking at systemic racism or racist policy (written and unwritten racially-biased rules or making decisions and judgments based on a group’s skin color or ethnicity.) It is to look at how aware we are as individuals about how we view people of different races and ethnicities.*

1. Ask the Spirit for wisdom and help: “Lord, open my eyes and my heart and shine a light on this sensitive subject.” Ask for the grace you need: “Lord, increase my awareness. Let me look at myself and others nonjudgmentally and with love.”

2. Thank God: “For all gifts of my life: (list what you are thankful for). Thank you Lord for the diversity of life—for the variety of plants and animals that add so much to the wonder and delight in our world, and for the diversity within the human species. As part of the natural world, we too vary: in our genders, our languages, religions, our skin, hair, and eye colors, our abilities and disabilities. We are all one, made in YOUR image, an image that encompasses all of creation.” 3. Let your memory take over and see if you can recall instances from your life that stand out to you: media reports, TV or movie portrayals, or especially personal experiences and interactions with those whose skin color or ethnicity is different from yours. If it is easier, think back over the past six months or year (both pre-and post-COVID). Sit quietly with your feelings and thoughts. Remember, feelings and thoughts are neither positive nor negative; they just are. Try not to judge or ruminate on actions or reactions. If needed, here are some suggested questions/concepts for reflection:

 Think about your childhood.

What were the demographics of the school you attended, your neighborhood, your church?

 Think about the present: the demographics of work, neighborhood, places of worship?

 When I see a person I don’t know, what is the first thing I consciously notice about them? (e.g., age, race, body type, clothing, appearance, etc.)?

 When you are asked to describe yourself or another, what is the first adjective or descriptor that comes to mind?

Consider the subtle racial and ethnic stereotypes and assumptions our society accepts as givens, or words that are used the imply race or ethnicity (e.g., urban/suburban).

 Friends of different ethnicities can broaden our perspectives. Consider how many of your friends or close colleagues are of an ethnicity other than yours. (Note: Not just acquaintances or co-workers, but people with whom you regularly socialize with.)

**From** http://www.jesuitseastois.org/news-detail?TN=NEWS-20200812110557

**Closing Song:**

**We Shall Overcome**

**Verse 1**

We shall overcome

We shall overcome

We shall overcome someday

**Chorus**

Oh deep in my heart

I do believe

We shall overcome someday

**Verse 3**

We shall live in peace

We shall live in peace

We shall live in peace someday

**Verse 4**

We are not afraid

We are not afraid

We are not afraid today

**Verse 5**

God will see us through

 God will see us through

 God will see us through today