

**OPEN WIDE**  
**OUR VINCENTIAN HEARTS**  
**HOPE IN THE FACE OF RACISM SERIES**

**A COLLABORATION OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN TASK FORCE  
AND THE VOICE OF THE POOR COMMITTEE**



# Opening Prayer

**Wake me up Lord**, so that the evil of racism finds no home within me. Keep watch over my heart Lord, and remove from me any barriers to your grace, that may oppress and offend my brothers and sisters.

**Fill my spirit Lord**, so that I may give services of justice and peace. **Clear my mind Lord**, and use it for your glory.

And finally, remind us Lord that you said, "**blessed are the peacemakers**, for they shall be called children of God."  
Amen.

*From For The Love of One Another (1989), a special message from the Bishops' Committee on Black Catholics of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on the Occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of the Pastoral Letter, Brothers and Sisters to Us, the U.S. Catholic bishops' Pastoral Letter on Racism (1979).*

# Setting Our Intention

“Not everything that is faced can be changed, but  
nothing can be changed until it is faced.”

*James Baldwin, 1924-1987*

Novelist | Playwright | Poet | Activist

# Pope Francis, General Audience

Today I join the Church in Saint Paul and Minneapolis, and in the entire United States, in praying for the repose of the soul of George Floyd and of all those others who have lost their lives as a result of the sin of racism.

June 3, 2020

# Statement of U.S. Bishop Chairmen in Wake of Death of George Floyd and National Protests

Racism is not a thing of the past or simply a throwaway political issue to bandied about when convenient. It is a real and present danger that must be met head on. (...) We cannot turn a blind eye to these atrocities and yet still try to profess to respect every human life. We serve a God of love, mercy, and justice.

May 29, 2020

# One Vincentian story

# A moment of silent reflection

Please stay engaged with us during this moment

# Going Deeper

How do you feel when you hear these stories?



# Examination of Conscience

1 of 4

1. **Have I** done enough to **inform myself** about the sin of racism, its roots, and its historical and contemporary manifestations?
2. **Have I** caused pain to others by my actions or my words that offended my brother or my sister?

# Examination of Conscience

## 2 of 4

3. **Have I** ever witnessed an occasion when someone "fell victim" to personal, institutional, systematic or social racism and I did or said nothing, leaving the victim to address their pain alone?

4. **Have I opened my heart** to see how **unequal access** to economic opportunity, jobs, housing, health and education impacts the communities we serve?

# Examination of Conscience

## 3 of 4

5. Do I recognize a fight for equality and equity for my fellow brothers and sisters does not diminish my own personal benefits?

6. **Is there** a root of racism **within *me*** that blurs my vision of who my neighbor is?

# Examination of Conscience

4 of 4

7. **Have I** ever lifted up and aided a person who "fell victim" to personal, institutional, systematic or social racism and paid a price for extending mercy to the other? How did I react? Did my faith grow? Am I willing to grow even more in faith through my actions?

8. **Have I opened my heart** to see how the correction of **unequal access** is being pursued under the Society's Position papers?

# Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of Heaven and the pains of Hell; but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, Who art all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen

# Continuing the Dialogue

**“Let us occupy ourselves with people who have too many needs and not enough rights, who call out rightly for a greater involvement in public affairs, for guarantees of work — and who cry out against misery.”**

**Frédéric Ozanam to his friend Foisset in 1848.**

# Next Steps

**Session 2: Roots of Systemic Racism**

**[Wednesday, June 17 4:00 ET/3:00 CT](#)**

**Session 3: Transforming Our Concern Into Action**

**Wednesday, June 24 4:00/3:00 CT**

Pamela Matambanadzo: [vop@svdpchicago.org](mailto:vop@svdpchicago.org)

Chair, African American Task Force

Jack Murphy: [jack.murphy@att.net](mailto:jack.murphy@att.net)

Chair, Voice of the Poor Committee

# Closing Prayer

God of Heaven and Earth, you created the one human family and endowed each person with great dignity. Aid us, we pray, in overcoming the sin of racism. Grant us your grace in eliminating this blight from our hearts, our communities, our social and civil institutions.

Fill our hearts with love for you and our neighbor so that we may work with you in healing our land from racial injustice.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.