

# TRANSFORMING OUR CONCERN INTO ACTION

## 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*

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.

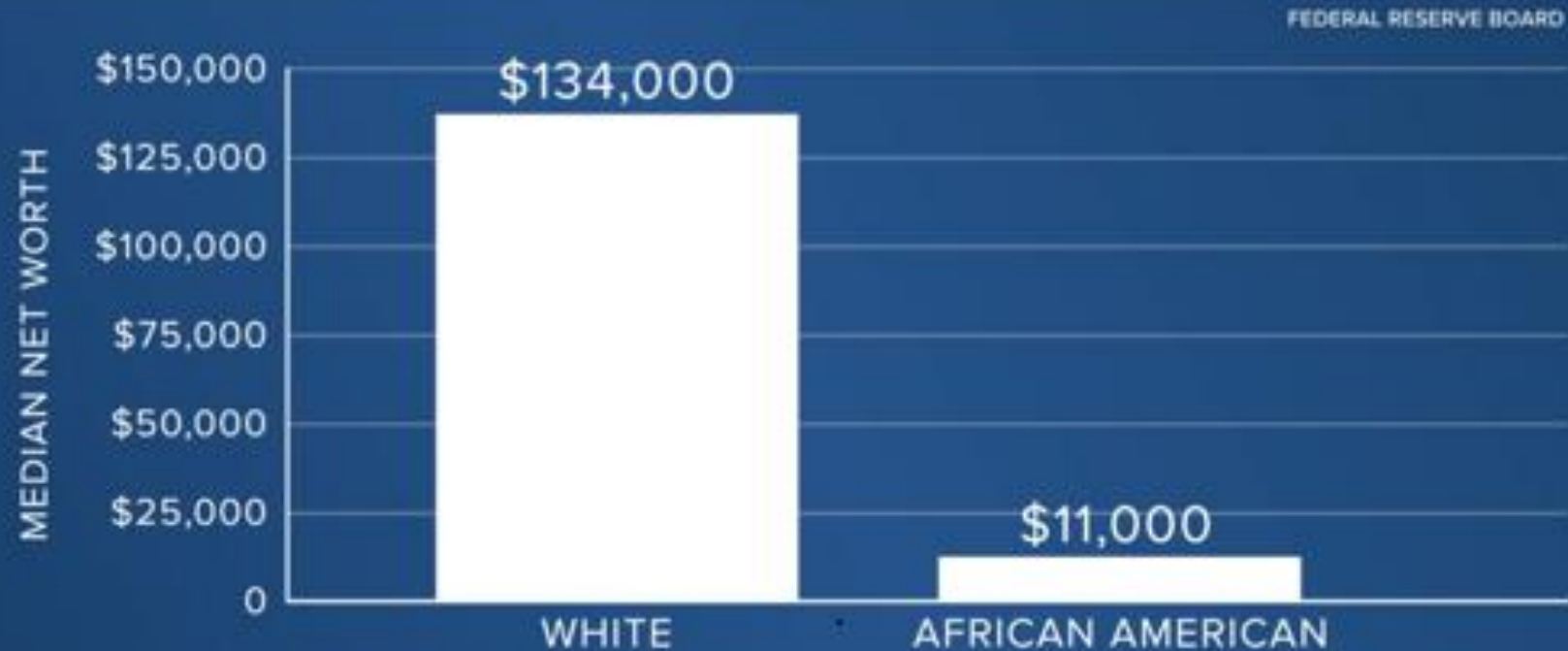
And finally, remind us Lord that you said, "blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God."

*Amen.*

"A Prayer Service for Racial Healing in Our Land", United States Conference of Catholic Bishops  
[usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/prayer-service-for-racial-healing.cfm](https://usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/prayer-service-for-racial-healing.cfm)

# WEALTH GAP BETWEEN WHITE AND BLACK FAMILIES

RESPONDING TO INEQUALITIES/WEALTH GAP



From [“Responding to Inequalities: Closing the wealth and poverty gaps for African American communities”](#) (June 9, 2020), based on this [report from the Federal Reserve Board](#).

*"Structural racism is the biased societal approach to housing, education, employment, healthcare, and criminal justice."*

Niran S. Al-Agba, MD

***STRUCTURAL RACISM  
AFFECTS  
HEALTHCARE***



***Racism operates at multiple levels,  
ranging from individual to structural.***





# ***HEALTHCARE IN AMERICA***



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xZRTLnfqU>

# COVID-19 PANDEMIC

## AFRICAN AMERICANS

- **Less COVID-19 testing**
- **Mortality rate 10 times higher**
- **75% of deaths in D.C.**





## ***Members of SSVdP can...***

- ***Read SSVdP Position Statement on Health Care***
- ***Educate others***
- ***Support meaningful health care benefits***
- ***Use existing resources to serve the greater good***
- ***Encourage and enable health care service for all***
- ***Collaborate on specific health care issues***



***“Inspired by Gospel values...”***



The two Mobile Soup Bus Kitchens are renovated school buses with small kitchenettes and running water that go out into neighborhoods to feed the hungry! Both Soup Buses have 6 tables each and the capacity to seat 24 people at a time.



This ministry feeds an average of 80 people per night and serves more than 17,000 hot meals each year. The bus is staffed with crews made up of volunteers who prepare and bring the meals on the Bus four nights a week!

*No work of charity is foreign to the Society”*





***23.5 million Americans currently live in  
food deserts***

*Does the community in which you serve have food deserts?*

# **FOOD DESERTS: SOLUTIONS**

- **IDENTIFY FOOD DESERTS**
- **CHALLENGE POLICIES & PRACTICES**
- **ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT**
- **FIND FINANCING**



*“Love is creative to infinity”*





*When plentiful and freely shared,  
food creates healthy communities  
and strong societies;  
when scarce or unfairly distributed,  
it damages and,  
in time kills, spirit, body, family,  
community.*



# ***Urban Farming and Nutrition Program***



*“Love is creative to infinity”*



**JESUS CAME TO EARTH SO THOSE**

**“WHO DO NOT SEE,  
MIGHT SEE.”**

**JOHN 9:39**

*What are some actions your Conference can take to  
address racism in healthcare?*

**Presentation by:**

Barbara Slaven  
Voice of the Poor Committee  
bslaven1@hotmail.com

Marie A. Wicks  
Eastern Region Representative:  
African American Task Force  
marieawicks@aol.com





# HOMELESSNESS IN AMERICA

---

WALLITA SYKES-BUSH

# OVERVIEW

---



Systematic Racism



Disparities in the  
System



Factors of  
Homelessness



Advocacy



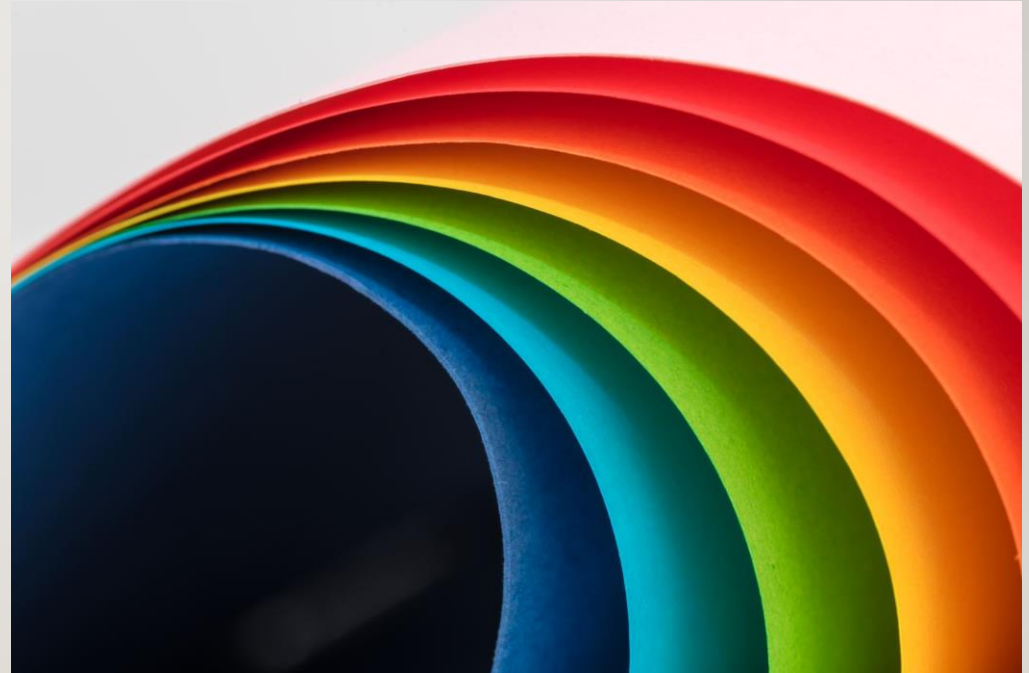
Recommendations



# SYSTEMATIC RACISM

---

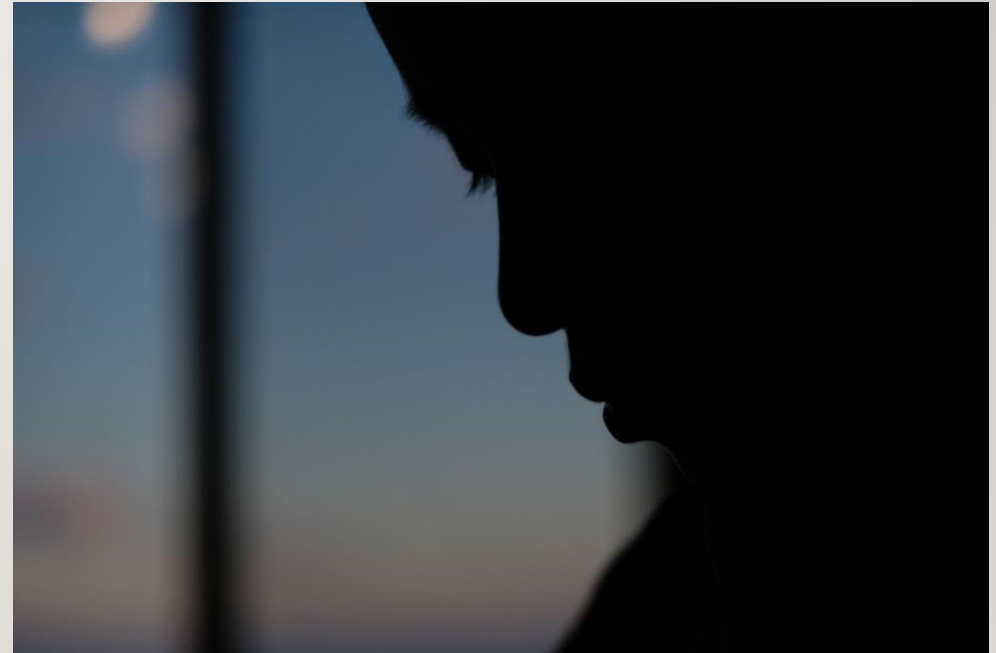
- It creates inequality
- U.S. founded on freedom and liberty--just not for everyone



# DISPARITIES IN THE SYSTEM

---

- Systematic effects
- Discrimination





# FACTORS OF HOMELESSNESS

---

- Causes of Homelessness
- Institutional failures



# ADVOCACY

---

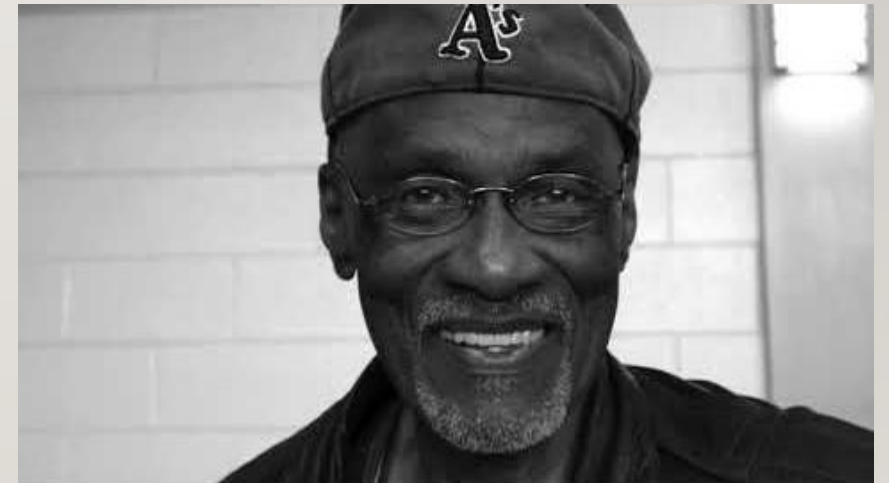
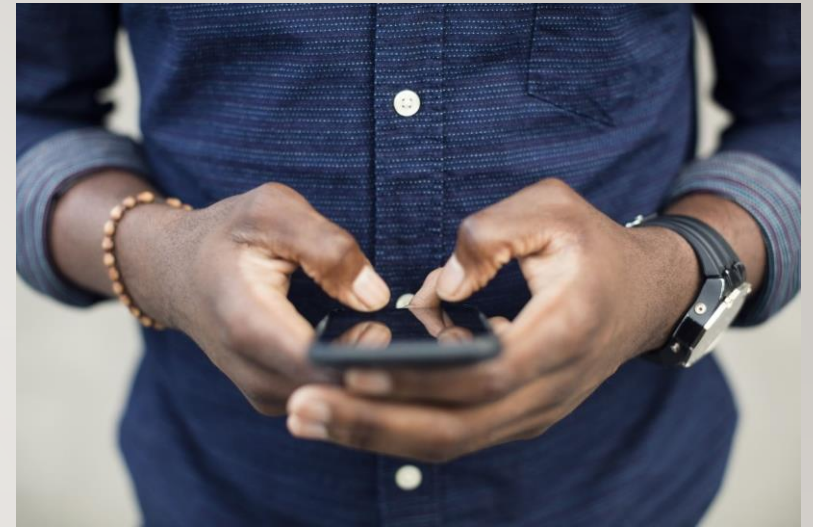
- Improve access to federal resources (HUD)
- Educate local officials in community
- Construct and build affordable housing



# RESOURCES

---

- Call 211 (CA)
- Homelessness Support
- Resource Directory
- Housing Resource Guide
- Alameda County Community Food Bank



[https://youtu.be/FoZFLw\\_6bDI](https://youtu.be/FoZFLw_6bDI)



# DEFINITIONS

## Racism

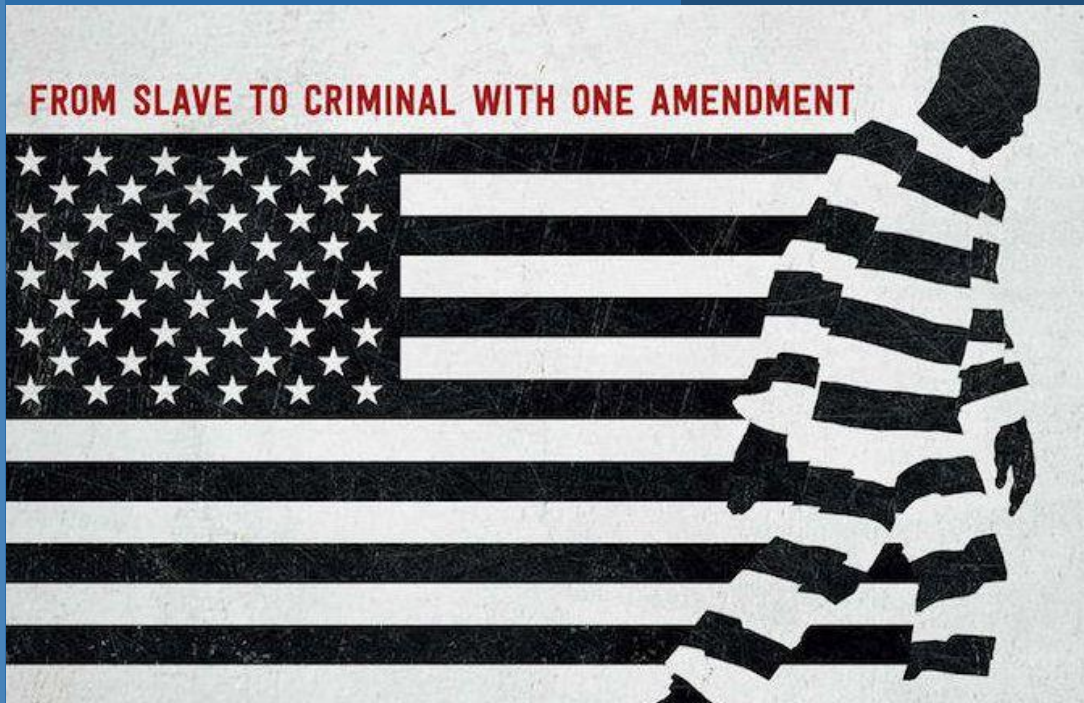
- prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against a person or people based on their membership in a racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized.

## Systemic Racism

- a form of racism expressed in the practice of social and **political institutions**. It is reflected in disparities regarding wealth, income, criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, political power and education, among other factors.



# 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment



- Section 1.
- **Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.**
- Section 2.
- Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

# Who Profits? FOLLOW THE MONEY

Just A Few Corporations Exploiting Prison Labor



Prisons are Profitable. Please Help Us Keep Them Full

- Prison labor is a billion-dollar industry, with uncertain returns for inmates



# The War on Drugs

(synonymous with African Americans as War on the black man, family, and the community)

- **Policies- 1971**

- [Richard M. Nixon](#) signed the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) into law in 1970. This statute calls for the regulation of certain drugs and substances.

- **Nixon** went on to create the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in 1973. This agency is a special police force committed to targeting illegal drug use and smuggling in the United States.

- At the start, the DEA was given 1,470 special agents and a budget of less than \$75 million. Today, the agency has nearly 5,000 agents and a budget of \$2.03 billion.

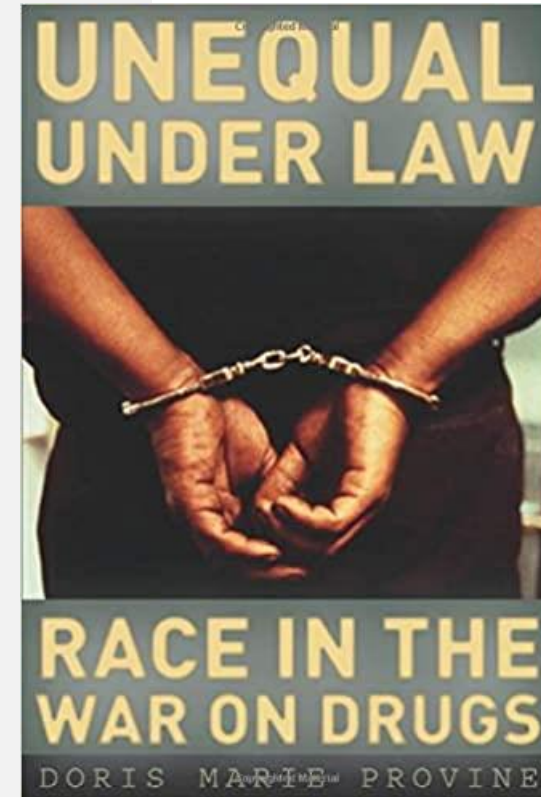
- **Target Groups-** Anti war protesters and African American citizens





# Criminalization of African Americans

- Ronald Reagan's presidency was almost deemed as a continuation. He fed off Nixon and fed off the fear of blacks as "**criminals.**" This continually fed the prison industrial complex as the population increased.





# Criminalization of African Americans cont.

- During Bill Clinton's presidency, not only did he continue the "war on drugs," but he created the **crime bill** and **mandatory minimums**. Once again, this goes back to more policy disproportionately affecting blacks. Yield offenses often lead to blacks being forced into a plea deal (minimum sentencing) or run the risk of being overcharged.
- Black nuclear families have been torn apart since the days of slavery





# Fatherlessness



- Children are four-times more likely to be poor if the father is not around. And we know that poverty is heavily associated with academic success. [Fatherless kids] are also twice as likely to drop out of school.
- Youths in father-absent households have significantly higher odds of incarceration.
- Also, Consider the Pruitt-Igoe housing complex (1956-1976) in St. Louis, Mo. By policy, in this housing project, homes were allotted to families under the condition that men could not be present around during the workday. **This resulted in fathers, often unemployed, having to hide in the closet.** Eventually they would just stop showing up.



# Racial Disparity in the Judicial System

## Consequences of the War on Drugs

Public support for the war on drugs has waned in recent decades. Some Americans and policymakers feel the campaign has been ineffective or has led to racial divide.

Between 2009 and 2013, some **40 states** took steps to soften their drug laws, lowering penalties and shortening mandatory minimum sentences, according to the [Pew Research Center](#).

When people are released from jail or prison, they are hoping for a second chance. But they face more than **48,000** separate restrictions, known as collateral consequences.

African Americans are up to 10 times more likely than whites to be stopped, arrested, and sentenced. They are also up to 10 times more likely to face these restrictions.

# Hope in the Face of Racism Series 3

*“God wants us all to see one another as brothers and to live as such, forming a great human family that is harmonious in its diversity”.* — **Pope Francis**

*“Make it a practice to judge persons and things in the most favorable light at all times and under all circumstances.”*  
— **St. Vincent de Paul**

- I. Expand and Strengthen Our Network of Friends
- II. Encourage and Support Vincentians on Their Spiritual Journey
- III. Advocate for And Work for a More Just World
- **IV. Promote Deeper and Meaningful Relationships With Those We Serve**
- **V. Develop, Improve, and Expand Services**





# Equity

- It begins by joining together, believing in the potency of inclusion, and building from a common bond.
- It embraces complexity as cause for collaboration, accepting that our fates are inextricable.
- It recognizes local leaders as national leaders, nurturing the wisdom and creativity within every community as essential to solving the nation's problems.
- It demands honesty and forthrightness, calling out racism and oppression, both overt and systemic.
- It strives for the power to realize our goals while summoning the grace to sustain them.
- **This is equity:** just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Unlocking the promise of the nation by unleashing the promise in us all.

[www.policylink.org](http://www.policylink.org)

- **IT REQUIRES THAT WE UNDERSTAND THE PAST, WITHOUT BEING TRAPPED IN IT; EMBRACE THE PRESENT, WITHOUT BEING CONSTRAINED BY IT; AND LOOK TO THE FUTURE, GUIDED BY THE HOPES AND COURAGE OF THOSE WHO HAVE FOUGHT BEFORE AND BESIDE US.**



**Wayne Bugg**

Saint Vincent de Paul Twin Cities  
Associate Executive Director  
African American Task Force-NC Region  
[wbuggs@svdpmpls.org](mailto:wbuggs@svdpmpls.org)  
[www.svdpmpls.org](http://www.svdpmpls.org)

**Allison Pittman**

Saint Vincent de Paul St. Louis  
African American Task Force Midwest Region  
[apittmansvdp@gmail.com](mailto:apittmansvdp@gmail.com)



**RESOURCES**

**War on Drugs**

[https://www.history.com/topics/crime/the-war-on-drugs#section\\_4](https://www.history.com/topics/crime/the-war-on-drugs#section_4)

**Mass Incarcerations**

<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2020.html>

**Single Parent Homes/Family**

<https://www.unitedfamilies.org/child-development/fatherlessness-poverty-and-crime/>

**SVdP Voice of the Poor**

<https://svdpstlouis.org/what-we-do/voice-poor>

**SVdP Prison Reentry Program**

[www.immersionreentry.com](http://www.immersionreentry.com)  
<https://vimeo.com/430754440>

**Big Brother Big Sisters**

<https://www.bbbs.org>

**13th** is a 2016 American documentary by director [Ava DuVernay](#). The film explores the "intersection of race, justice, and mass incarceration in the United States.

<https://youtu.be/krfcq5pF8u8>

# Next Steps

**Session 4: Where do we go from here?**

**Wednesday, July 1 4:00/3:00 CT**

**[Register](#)**

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

## For Courage to do Justice

O Lord, open my eyes that I may see the  
needs of others  
Open my ears that I may hear their cries;

Open my heart so that they need not be  
without succor;

Let me not be afraid to defend the weak  
because of the anger of the strong,  
Nor afraid to defend the poor because of  
the anger of the rich.

Show me where love and hope and faith  
are needed,  
And use me to bring them to those  
places.

And so open my eyes and my ears  
That I may this coming day be able to do  
some work of peace for thee.

*Amen.*