



LENT 2021 – A JOURNEY FROM RACISM TO THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

“Sometimes, one may hear people giving up something during Lent as a spiritual exercise, such as eating certain kinds of food, watching television, or surfing the internet daily. I think it is crucial that black churches, rather than give up something, give something, do something, or say something that speaks to the sufficient grace of God which we sorely need and desire as Christians. In this penitential season, as we give ourselves to God, we receive so much more.” Luke Powery

- 17 Ash Wednesday** Resolve to repent of the sin of racism and believe the good news of God’s beloved community.
- 18 Thursday** Birthday (1934) of Audre Lorde “I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood.”
- 19 Friday** Share a copy of this calendar with a friend and invite them to join you on this Lenten journey.
- 20 Saturday** Birthday (1895) of Frederick Douglass “The white man’s happiness cannot be purchased by the black man’s misery.”
- 21 First Sunday of Lent** Birthday (1940) of John Lewis, *“Freedom is not a state; it is an act. It is not some enchanted garden perched high on a distant plateau where we can finally sit down and rest. Freedom is the continuous action we all must take, and each generation must do its part to create an even more fair, more just society.”*
- 22 Monday** Check out the website of *The Black Catholic Messenger* to get a Black perspective on Catholic news <https://www.blackcatholicmessenger.com/>
- 23 Tuesday** Do a cultural audit of your home. Do you have art, music, literature, food from cultures other than your own?
- 24 Wednesday** In prayer, list five ways in which you see white privilege operative in American society today.
- 25 Thursday** Investigate ways in which you can purchase goods and services from minority-owned businesses.
- 26 Friday** Murder (2012) of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman. In prayer lament this senseless loss.
- 27 Saturday** Pray for vocations to historically African American religious communities of women: The Oblate Sisters of Providence, the Sisters of the Holy Family, the Franciscan Handmaids of the Most Pure Heart of Mary. *“If my sister or brother is not at the table, we are not the flesh of Christ. If my sister’s mark of sexuality must be obscured, if my brother’s mark of race must be disguised, if my sister’s mark of culture must be repressed, then we are not the flesh of Christ. For, it is through and in Christ’s own flesh that the ‘other’ is my sister, is my brother; indeed, the ‘other’ is me...”* M. Shawn Copeland
- 28 Second Sunday of Lent**
- March 1 Monday** This week reflect on these steps of interrupting racism when you experience racist language or behavior: Begin by breathing and grounding yourself.
- 2 Tuesday** Name the behavior. Call out the remark, not the person.
- 3 Wednesday** Name how the behavior makes you feel and describe the impact of the behavior.
- 4 Thursday** Give a direction – ask the person to reconsider their remark.
- 5 Friday** Stay – be willing to stay in relationship, in conversation with the person.
- 6 Saturday** Share your experiences with this process with someone else. *“We are called to engage in life-affirming, God glorifying, agony-eradicating ministry. We are called to partner with Jesus in service, not pain. Pain is a consequence of discipleship. It is not a lifestyle, a life sentence, or a life goal. Pain only signals the level of opposition to ministry. It is not the measure of discipleship; ministry is.”* Raquel Annette St. Clair
- 7 Third Sunday of Lent**
- 8 Monday** As you watch/read the news this week, be conscious of how people of color are reported on or not. Bring these insights to prayer.
- 9 Tuesday** Examine your own biases and consider where they may have originated. What messages did you receive as a child about people who are different from you?
- 10 Wednesday** Anniversary of the death (+1913) of abolitionist Harriet Tubman, “Don’t ever stop. Keep going. If you want a taste of freedom, keep going.”
- 11 Thursday** How much do you know about these African American Catholics? Choose one and research their life: Sr. Thea Bowman, Arthur Falls, Mother Mary Lange, Fr. Lawrence Lucas, Diane Nash, Daniel Rudd.
- 12 Friday** Download a photograph of a lynching and place it near a crucifix in your prayer space. How do the two images illuminate each other?

13 Saturday Numerous studies have shown that Black and Hispanic communities are exposed to higher proportions of air pollution, toxic waste sites, landfills, lead poisoning, and other industrial complexes compared to white counterparts. Research environmental racism in your state.

“Black women have not focused sufficiently on our need for contemplative spaces. We are often ‘too busy’ to find time for solitude. And yet it is in the stillness that we also learn how to be with ourselves in a spirit of acceptance and peace. Then when we re-enter community, we are able to extend this acceptance to others. Without knowing how to be alone, we cannot know how to be with others and sustain the necessary autonomy.” bell hooks

14 Fourth Sunday of Lent

15 Monday International Day Against Police Brutality – Pray for people of color who have been brutalized or died at the hands of police.

16 Tuesday Try to practice active listening by listening to understand rather than listening to respond or to defend yourself.

17 Wednesday Pray for the racial and ethnic groups that have been scapegoated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

18 Thursday Donate to an organization that promotes anti-racism.

19 Friday Avoid usage of stereotypical and normalized, micro-aggressive comments. Examples include: Where are you really from? What are you? You sound white.

20 Saturday Many streaming services have excellent collections of films on racism and the experiences of people of color – watch one with a friend and discuss it.

“What makes the Church white and racist is the pervasive belief that European aesthetics, European music, European theology, and European persons, and only these, are standard, normative, universal, and truly Catholic. In other words, when we talk about what makes something Catholic, the default is always to the products that reflect a white cultural aesthetic. Everything else is seen as Catholic by exception, or Catholic by toleration.”

Fr. Bryan Massingale

21 Fifth Sunday of Lent

22 Monday Donate money to your local library to buy multicultural books for children.

23 Tuesday When you examine your conscience do you consider your participation in racial injustice? Have you ever mentioned racism in confession?

24 Wednesday “What does it mean to be black and Catholic? It means that I come to my church fully functioning. That doesn’t frighten you, does it? I come to my church fully functioning. I bring myself, my black self, all that I am, all that I have, all that I hope to become.” Sr. Thea Bowman, FSPA

25 Thursday Feast of the Annunciation “We are told of meek obedience. No one mentions courage.” Denise Levertov/Anniversary of the Selma March (1965)

26 Friday Listen to some African American spirituals.

27 Saturday Include a message about racial justice from a person of color with the signature line of your email.

“The gospel of Jesus is not a rational concept to be explained but a story about God’s presence in Jesus’ solidarity with the oppressed, which led to his death on the cross. What is redemptive is the faith that God snatches victory out of defeat.” James Cone

28 Sixth Sunday of Lent

29 Monday Educate yourself on the Black Lives Matter movement to separate fact from fiction.

30 Tuesday Use the internet to find images of the Passion of Jesus from artists of color.

31 Wednesday Share with a friend what the experience has been like to use this Lenten calendar.

April 1 Holy Thursday “My feet is tired, but my soul is rested.” These words uttered by an elderly African American woman, Mrs. Pollard, as she strode with thousands of others during the Montgomery Bus Boycott gave witness to how she was expressing her faith, speaking her theology, with her feet. As you reflect this evening on Jesus washing the feet of the disciples ask yourself, “how do I speak my theology with my feet?”

2 Good Friday In the “lynching era,” between 1880 to 1940, white Christians lynched nearly five thousand black men and women in a manner with obvious echoes of the Roman crucifixion of Jesus. Yet these “Christians” did not see the irony or contradiction in their actions. James Cone

3 Holy Saturday As part of renewing your baptismal vows tonight resolve to renounce personal and communal racism in ways that foster change.

4 Easter Sunday Assassination of Martin Luther King (1968) People are always asking, “What is the most durable power in the universe? And the fact is that Easter answers that question too. You wonder about it. What is it that is the heartbeat of the moral cosmos? What is it? It’s the power of love. Easter tells us that. Sometimes it looks like the other powers are much more durable. Then we come to see that isn’t true. But the most durable, lasting power in this world is the power to love. Martin Luther King