

A YEAR OF PRAYERS TO END RACISM

THE DIOCESSAN COMMISSION TO END RACISM

The purpose of the Diocesan Commission to End Racism is ‘to work for the elimination of racism, whether in the church or in the community, with the utilization of education, group interaction, anti-racism dialogues, and prayer.’ The goal of the Commission is “to bring about mutual understanding, respect, appreciation, and fair treatment for people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds.”

The Commission has developed a series of special collects calling attention to specific issues still prevalent in our society today that we as a church must be ever mindful of as we work toward making the world a better place for all of God’s people. We ask worship leaders to consider using these prayers as an additional collect alongside the Collect of the Day, or as a part of the Prayers of the People, or in some other appropriate place within our common worship.

ANTI-RACISM COLLECTS

1. **JANUARY--For an end to slavery:** (January 1, Emancipation Proclamation)

“O God of liberty and justice: we live in a nation in which the institution of human bondage was once a legal and accepted practice. We give thanks for those who worked and fought, at great personal sacrifice, to bring about an end to that cruel and oppressive system in our own land, and we pray that governments and authorities everywhere in the world might be led to make a quick end to the enslavement of any human being, throughout the Earth.” **Amen**

2. **FEBRUARY--For humanity toward perceived enemies:** (Internment of Japanese Americans, February 19 executive order)

“O God of all nations and all peoples: our nation once, in time of war, forcibly interned in camps, without trial and without just cause, many of our own people because of their Japanese ancestry. Grant us, by your grace, the strength and courage never again to treat as enemies any entire group of persons, solely because of the enmity of some members of that group, but to defend and preserve the basic human rights of all people, even in times of distress, for the sake of your Son who died for all.” **Amen**

3. **MARCH-- For racial harmony**

“Creator of all people, in our amazing diversity of size, shape, color, and giftedness: guide us, by your grace, to recognize the beauty and fitness of all whom you have made in your own image. Give us gifts of humility and generosity of spirit to recognize in all people, the face of our Savior, Jesus, and to practice his commandment to “love one another,” toward the end of bringing harmony and peace among persons of all colors, origins, and abilities, for the sake of your Kingdom.” **Amen.**

4. **APRIL-- For the heroes and heroines of the struggle for civil rights** (thanks and future encouragement) (April, death of Martin Luther King, Jr)

“O bountiful and merciful God: you have blessed your people with great prophets and leaders to advance the cause of equality under law in this nation and in the world. By their teaching and preaching; by their action and example; by their marching, demonstrating, and sitting in; by their organizing, praying and singing, they have made themselves and the dream of non-discrimination impossible for opponents to ignore and possible for those marginalized to dream. Give us such leaders always, Lord. Let the cry for justice always be heard in our land until, by your gracious will, your children live together in freedom, justice, and equality. **Amen.**

5. **MAY—For an end to racial prejudice:**

“ One God, in Three Persons, creator of one human species, in many hues: all who pray to you are descendants of Adam and Eve, all members of one race called “human.” Forgive the blindness that causes our eyes to notice and magnify those things we regard as different from ourselves in others. Teach us to see clearly, that we, your children, are far more alike than we are different. Help us to put aside the racial prejudices imbedded within us, and to see within every person the Child of God you created, our sister or brother, destined for Glory. In the name of One who died for all persons, of all colors, Jesus Christ.” **Amen.**

6. **JUNE--For justice in the criminal system:**

“Lord, you suffered at human hands the pain of false arrest, torture, and unjust punishment, and you commanded us to comfort those in prison. Build a fire in your people, Lord, that we may never learn patience with prejudice or make peace with oppression, but that we may burn with zeal for justice, proportion, and equal protections under law for all people. In the Name of him who died condemned.” **Amen.**

7. JULY—For freedom from fears:

“O Holy Spirit of comfort and eternal presence: spread over us, your weary and anxious people, your protective and reassuring wings, that we might be delivered from our fears of one another: that we might experience the exhilarating freedom of welcoming even strangers without defensiveness, hostility, or suspicion, but rather with openness, hospitality, and the expectation of friendship. In the Name of Jesus, who welcomes all.”
Amen.

8. AUGUST-- For appreciation of diverse cultural contributions

“O God of all nations and peoples: We live in a nation of immigrants, and one in which the diverse gifts of many peoples have contributed to our energy and strength. Yet it is one in which some immigrants are discriminated against because of the color of their skin, their language, or the country of their origin. Help us, by your grace, to offer hospitality to all strangers, as our Father Abraham did in the desert. Grant us the wisdom and skill to enact just and merciful immigration reforms so that the hospitality and access to this great land may be offered equally to people of all colors and races and nations.”
Amen.

9. SEPTEMBER--For racial equality in education, housing, public services, and employment opportunity

“ God our Creator, you created humankind in your image, and blessed us with your love. Help us to show that love to one another as we work for equality for all races in education, housing, public services, and employment opportunity. Give us strength and courage to speak out against injustice, and to work for the transformation of unjust systems that keep some in bondage: that we may more fully live out your kingdom here on earth; through Jesus Christ your son, who came to set us free.” **Amen.**

10. OCTOBER-- For justice and mercy for indigenous peoples (October, Columbus Day)

“O God of infinite mercy, we live in a land where the native peoples were moved, often by force, from the bountiful lands they inhabited to places of desolation. Help us to support them now as they seek to retain their rich native cultures. Open our eyes to the poverty and despair that so often accompany them through life, and give us the courage

and will to change the systems that perpetuate injustice, for the sake of your Son our Lord.” **Amen.**

11. **NOVEMBER--For compassion and civility towards persons of other religions,** particularly when race or ethnicity is a factor (image of God, hospitality to stranger)

“God of compassion and justice, help us in this age of great division and polarization to learn the art of civil discourse and compassionate listening with those who worship you through other religions; particularly our Jewish, Muslim, and Hindi brothers and sisters. Guide us to recognize your image even in the faces of those who do not remind us of ourselves, looking past our differences to find our common interests and goals, that we may work together to bring healing to a broken world.” **Amen.**

12. **DECEMBER--** for non-discrimination with regard to social services

“O giver of all good gifts, you have differently blessed and differently challenged your children. Some of us have handicaps for which we need the aid of social services, and some of us find our quest for such aid hindered by the complication of racial discrimination. Help us to overcome barriers of all kinds that prevent your people from functioning fully and freely, and let us never tolerate the denial of equal services to anyone because of their race. **Amen.**

“HOLY WOMEN, HOLY MEN--*OF COLOR*”

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR USE OF THE CHURCH’S NEW CALENDAR BOOK OF
SAINTS, *HOLY WOMEN, HOLY MEN*,

TO HONOR THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF PERSONS OF COLOR, AND TO TEACH AND
ENCOURAGE RESISTANCE TO RACISM BY CHURCH CONGREGATIONS

Your Commission to End Racism of the Diocese of West Virginia urges each congregation in the diocese to purchase and use a copy of the new publication, *Holy Women, Holy Men*, which replaces the *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* series. The new book contains all the traditional

observances, but adds many more newly approved selections, including more non-whites, more women, more contemporary persons, and more non-Episcopalians.

We particularly call your attention to the expanded list of minorities and non-European Christians, persons who have dedicated their lives to representing the Gospel among indigenous peoples, and martyrs to the faith in foreign lands. (See “A Representative List of Anti-Racism Observances” which follows.)

How can a congregation make use of these resources? We suggest:

- Focus for a year on contributions of persons of color, seeking to build awareness of the role of such persons in the life of the church
- Use *HW, HM* Propers at weekday Eucharists or prayer services
- Print excerpts in bulletins and newsletters
- Use in Church School for children’s education
- Use for special emphases for secondary Sunday observances, such as a Sunday evening worship service, after the regular Propers have been observed at the morning principal service
- Use the Propers along with appropriate music, costuming, dance, or languages as a way to bring in more diverse styles of celebration (use LEVAS, for example)
- Build an adult education series around the Propers and the lives of these leaders
- Offer to members as an additional observation for personal daily prayers and meditation using the collects, lessons, and biographical information for reflection.

A REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF ANTI-RACISM OBSERVANCES
FROM *HOLY WOMEN, HOLY MEN*

Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah, Jan 2 b

Harriett Bedell Jan 8 A

January 24 Ordination of Florence Li Tim-Oi

Janani Luwum, Feb 17

Frederick Douglas, Feb 20

John Roberts, Feb 25

Anna Julia Haywood Cooper and Elizabeth Evelyn Wright, Feb 28

Paul Cuffee, March 4

James Theodore Holly, Mar 13 or Nov 8

Oscar Romero and the Martyrs of El Salvador, Mar 24

Richard Allen, Mar 26

Martin Luther King, Jr, April 4 or Jan 15

Pandita Mary Ramabai, Apr 5

Daniel G. C. Wu, Apr 6

Edward Thomas Demby and Henry Beard Delany, Apr 14

Mary Brant, Apr 16

Genocide Remembrance, Apr 24

Thurgood Marshall, May 17

John Eliot, May 21

Emmegahbowh, June 12

James Weldon Johnson, June 25

Cornelius Hill, June 27

Samson Occum, July 14

Sojourner Truth and Harriet Ross Tubman (with others), July 20

Albert John Luthuli, July 21

George Freeman Bragg, Jr., Aug 3

W. E. B. DuBois, Aug 3

Jonathan Myrick Daniels, Aug 14

David Pendleton Oakerhater, Sep 1

Alexander Crummell, Sep 10

Paul Shinji Sasaki and Philip Lindel Tsen, Oct 31

Kamehameha and Emma, Nov 28