

## February Prayer Vigil

February 20, 2018

### Opening Prayer

God of justice, in your wisdom you create all people in your image, without exception. Through your goodness, open our eyes to see the dignity, beauty and worth of every human being. Open our minds to understand that all your children are brothers and sisters in the same human family. Open our hearts to repent of racist attitudes, behaviors, and speech which demean others. Open our ears to hear the cries of those wounded by racial discrimination, and their passionate appeals for change. Strengthen our resolve to make amends for past injustices and to right the wrongs of history. And fill us with courage that we might seek to heal wounds, build bridges, forgive and be forgiven, and establish peace and equality for all in our communities. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

### 1<sup>st</sup> Reading – Bishop George Murry, Diocese of Youngstown

Racism is a sin that divides the human family and violates the fundamental human dignity of those called to be children of the same Father, and the church must become a consistent voice to eradicate it. In his letter to Ephesians, St. Paul tells us Jesus is our peace. It is by means of his shed blood and broken body that the dividing walls of enmity have been demolished. Today the Catholic Church in America must recognize that Christ wishes to break down the walls created by the evils of racism, whether that evil is displayed publicly for all to see or buried deep in the recesses of our hearts. If not, we are destined for history to continue to repeat itself, and once again the church will be perceived as a silent observer in the face of racism. In imitation of Christ, we the church must be willing to give our total lives over to the liberation of women and men by defending the dignity and fundamental rights of every human person and this includes a visible denouncement of racism. Through listening, prayer and meaningful collaboration, I am hopeful that we can find those lasting solutions that we so much need, and to find common ground, where racism will no longer find a place in our hearts or in our society.

**Reflection – [Reckoning: White Sisters respond to their own racism - Global Sisters Report](#)**

### Petitions

In hope that the arc of history bends toward justice, we lift up our prayers for racial healing, saying:  
**Bind us together, O God of Love.**

For the Church, that its prophetic voice may proclaim to all the challenge to break the hopeless cycles of poverty, ignorance, prejudice, and despair which degrade the sacred dignity of humankind, we pray:

For our country, that we might celebrate our racial diversity and the distinctive and rich contributions of every fiber of cultural fabric, we pray:

For wise and decisive action on the part of local and national leaders, that the scandal of racism may be eradicated from our society, we pray:

For an end to the subtle racism of economic oppression which permeates our society's structures and resides in many hearts, we pray:

For our faith communities, that they may not succumb to indifference or accept the status quo, but press on for fundamental change, we pray:

For the victims of racial discrimination, that they may be filled with hope for a more just future, healing from wounds received, courage to advocate for change and for peace, and the grace to overcome hate with love, we pray:

For those who work for racial justice, that they may be sustained in hope, empowered with courage, and filled with the grace to persevere in love, we pray:

### **Closing Prayer – Pax Christi**

Oh God,

**We cry justice** for our bruised and battered planet.

**We cry justice** for our poor and marginalized communities of color here and around the world.

**We cry justice** for our detained immigrant and refugee brothers and sisters in search of a home.

**We cry justice** for all harmed by an unjust global economy.

**We cry justice** for our criminal and legal system that is selective in who is held accountable.

**We cry justice** for our cities where violence is born of injustice and inhumane conditions.

**We cry justice... We cry peace.**

Amen

Adapted from Catholic Charities USA