

Gracious God,

We pray for the courage to live into our baptismal vow to respect the dignity of every human being. We pray for the victims of racism which dehumanizes all and for the courage to see beyond stereotypes and unite in the strength and promise of our common bond as children of God. We pray especially for Breonna Taylor, Ahmad, Arbery, and George Floyd, recent victims of this racism, and all those affected, directly or indirectly by their deaths: that they will be catalysts for the hard, too long neglected, ignored, and necessary work of reconciliation.

In faithful obedience, let us now pray this Litany for the Sins of Racism, that it will open our hearts, minds, and souls to be agents of change to bring about the beloved community:

A Litany for the Sins of Racism*

1) Oh God, in whose image the whole human family was created, we pray for all whose lives have been forever altered by racial violence.

While those whose lives have been altered are too many to name, we remember by name, Breonna Taylor, Ahmad Arbery, and George Floyd, beloved children of God, whose killings have yet again exposed the pervasive poison of racial injustice, inflamed rhetoric and division, and actions that perpetuate inequality.

Swaddle them in your boundless love.

Cradle them all in your peace.

2) We remember their families and friends, beloved children of God each one. Swaddle them in your boundless love.

Cradle them in your peace.

3) We remember the residents of too many of our cities, beloved children of God, who have seen their communities disrupted by horrific violence.

Swaddle them in your boundless love.

Cradle them in your peace.

4) We remember the protestors, beloved children of God, and those still gathering across cities, states, and the country to demand justice and change.

Swaddle them in your boundless love.

Cradle them in your peace.

5) We remember the residents of too many of our cities, beloved children of God, who have seen their neighborhood erupt in violence and destruction, especially by those whose aim is to further division and hatred. We remember those who have watched their livelihoods and places of work go up in flames.

Swaddle them in your boundless love.

Cradle them in your peace.

6) We remember those killed during the riots of this past week, beloved children of God.

Swaddle them in your boundless love.

Cradle them in your peace.

7) We remember the Black community throughout this country, beloved children of God, who have for decades cried out against injustice and brutality at the hands of police, and who have not been heard by those with the power to make change. We remember our Black brothers and sisters, groaning under the weight of redlining, segregation, underfunded schools, unequal economic opportunity, indignity, and ever-present fear.

Swaddle them in your boundless love.

Cradle them in your peace.

8) We remember our public officials, beloved children of God, managing a global pandemic, city-wide protests, violence, and profound public distrust at the same time.

Swaddle them in your boundless love.

Cradle them in your peace.

9) We pray for courage and integrity of all police officers who find themselves working within a system that has a fraught history of racial violence and injustice. We pray for courage and integrity as individuals, in this country, that we would stand for justice and work for systematic change in all our institutions.

Swaddle us in your boundless love.

Cradle them in your peace.

10) We remember all citizens of this country, beloved children of God. We have been traumatized, grief-stricken, enraged, and heart-sickened by the video of one neighbor slowly snuffing the life out of another, by riots and looting, by the sounds of flash-bang grenades, the sting of tear gas, the scent of smoke, and by our own helplessness.

Swaddle us in your boundless love.

Cradle us in your peace.

11) We remember those who have pledged their lives to racist ideologies, beloved children of God. We acknowledge the pain they have caused to victims of violence, to their communities, to their families, and to their own souls. We acknowledge that each of us carries racist ideology within us, and we beg your mercy to free all your people from it.

Swaddle us in your boundless love.

Cradle us in your peace.

12) We know that the sickness of racism is in this nation's very bedrock. Today we acknowledge and repent of the twin original sins of this nation: the genocide of the indigenous people of this land and the institution of chattel slavery. We know that the shockwaves from these sins still reverberate today, that the trauma from these sins live in our bodies, and that the pain we suffer now has its origin in those first treacheries.

Help us turn away from the sin of division

And toward your all-encompassing love.

13) We repent of laws that codify or allow unequal treatment based on race, ethnicity, religion, or skin tone. We repent of promises broken again and again. We repent of foreign policy that sees more value in some human lives than in others.

Help us turn away from the sin of division

And toward your all-encompassing love.

14) We repent of the role of the church, historically and presently, in supporting and emboldening these policies. We repent of the ways that we have made your church a home to oppression, exclusion, or indignity for any child of God.

Help us turn away from the sin of division

And toward your all-encompassing love.

15) We acknowledge and repent of the fact that this country has never shared its abundance equally. We acknowledge and repent of the fact of disparities based on race, that are born out in scholastic achievement, employment, household wealth, homeownership.

Help us turn away from the sin of division

And toward your all-encompassing love.

16) We repent of the ill-use of your bounty: we hoard land and wealth, manipulate plants and animals, abuse your creation, and your most vulnerable people suffer the consequences.

Help us turn away from the sin of division

And toward your all-encompassing love.

17) We who benefit from white supremacy acknowledge that we have been given unearned privilege at the expense of our Indigenous, Black, Asian, Latine, brown-skinned, immigrant, and non-Christian siblings. We repent of the ways in which we have allowed our own fear, complacency, and incuriosity to blind us to the belovedness of your children, each, like us, fearfully and wonderfully made.

Help us turn away from the sin of division

And toward your all-encompassing love.

18) Oh God of infinite affection, you looked at all that you had made and called it good. By your grace, help us to look upon your creation and to see, with your mothering eyes of love, how good, how good, how good it is.

Lord, in your mercy.

Christ, in your mercy.

Lord, in your mercy.

Amen.

Closing Words (from Presiding Bishop Michael Curry)

“What America has seen in the past several days may leave us wondering what we can possibly do in this moment to be good Samaritans—to help heal our country, even the parts we don’t know or like. But we have the answer. Now is the time for a national renewal of the ideals of human equality, liberty, and justice for all. Now is the time to commit to cherishing and respecting all lives, and to honoring the dignity and infinite worth of every child of God. Now is

the time for all of us to show—in our words, our actions, and our lives—what love really looks like.”

- Adapted from “A Litany for Minnesota’s Sins of Racism” by Emilia Allen