

Inclusive Community Project

Prayers for Black History & Heritage – 2016

Prayers gathered by Lukas Jimenez – Smith and the Committee

These prayer are available as a resource for prayer before class throughout Black History & Heritage month. Please feel free to also use these prayers whenever appropriate.

Prayer for Black History Month

Written by Fr. Clarence Williams, CPPS

Let us remember

That we are in the Holy presence of God

Father of creation

Whose Son Jesus incarnated in time

And whose Spirit enlivens our lives today

May we honor the height of your creation, the Human Family

In every hue that you chose to give each person of our family human

Jesus, brother of us all

Your prayer to the Father "that they all may be one"

Through the Holy Spirit

May we witness this Unity of One

Each people with its history of your love

Each people created in your earthly garden seen from above

A people's story woven in struggle and triumph

Tears of pain and shouts of joy

The journey of a people in its history's flow

The divine weaver's loom hand does show

Spirit of God in the month of appreciating

The gift of your children of African descent

May we be inspired to see your kingdom mystery

In one facet of the jewel of our Human Family's descent

Unity the prayer of your incarnate Son

Disciples praying the Our Father that we may all be one

One in love of the family human

One in hope for the family human

One in faith in the family human

This month, next week and everyday

Henceforth.

Amen. Saint John Baptist de La Salle – Pray for Us. Live Jesus in our Hearts. – Forever!

Listed below are prayers and reflections from prominent historical African-Americans. Written under their name is a short bio of the person followed by the prayer or reflection spoken by that person.

***Let us remember
That we are in the Holy presence of God***

Sojourner Truth: "Do For Me God"



The indefatigable Sojourner Truth, the former slave who became outspoken in her defense of human dignity, often spoke to God in a no-nonsense way. She believed that if she was to do God's work on earth, Divine Providence should be with her each step of the way.

Oh, God, you know I have no money, but you can make the people do for me, and you must make the people do for me. I will never give you peace till you do, God.

**Saint John Baptist de La Salle – *Pray for Us.
Live Jesus in our Hearts. – Forever!***

Let us remember

That we are in the Holy presence of God

W.E.B DuBois: "Give Us Grace"

Educator and civil rights activist W. E. B. Du Bois became the first African American to receive a doctorate from Harvard. An agnostic for much of his life, he nonetheless wrote dozens of exquisite spiritual entreaties. In this prayer he recalls the Old Testament figure of Esther, who daringly confronts her husband, King Xerxes, and demands that he overturn his court's order to kill all the Jews of the Persian Empire.



Give us grace, O God, to dare to do the deed which we well know cries to be done. Let us not hesitate because of ease, or the words of men's mouths, or our own lives. Mighty causes are calling us—the freeing of women, the training of children, the putting down of hate and murder and poverty—all these and more. But they call with voices that mean work and sacrifices and death. Mercifully grant us, O God, the spirit of Esther, that we say: I will go unto the King and if I perish, I perish.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle – *Pray for Us.*

Live Jesus in our Hearts. – Forever!

***Let us remember
That we are in the Holy presence of God***

Malcolm X: "Prayer to Allah"

This prayer, which stems from the teachings of the Koran, has had some significance in recent U.S. history. To Malcolm X, who was an avowed racist for a good portion of his adult life, it became the catalyst for his personal conversion. On a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1964, he witnessed tens of thousands of Muslims, including "blond-haired, blue-eyed men I could call my brothers," reciting these words, and he realized that he could no longer adhere to his prejudices.



*I submit to no one but Thee, O Allah, I submit
to no one but
Thee. I submit to Thee because Thou hast no
partner.
All praise and blessings come from Thee, and
Thou art alone in Thy kingdom.*

**Saint John Baptist de La Salle – Pray for Us.
Live Jesus in our Hearts. – Forever!**

***Let us remember
That we are in the Holy presence of God***

Mary McLeod Bethune: "Symphony of Life"

Born into a family of seventeen children whose parents had once been slaves, Mary McLeod Bethune became one of the most indefatigable voices for global equality and understanding in the immediate years before and after World War II. She was a self-assured educator, activist, and columnist and found in prayer one of life's great comforts. Here she expresses her firm belief in the beauty of diversity throughout the world.



Father, we call Thee Father because we love Thee. We are glad to be called Thy children, and to dedicate our lives to the service that extends through willing hearts and hands to the betterment of all mankind. We send a cry of Thanksgiving for people of all races, creeds, classes, and colors the world over, and pray that through the instrumentality of our lives the spirit of peace, joy, fellowship, and brotherhood shall circle the world.

We know that this world is filled with discordant notes, but help us, Father, to so unite our efforts that we may all join in one harmonious symphony for peace and brotherhood, justice, and equality of opportunity for all men. The tasks performed today with forgiveness for all our errors, we dedicate, dear Lord, to Thee.

Grant us strength and courage and faith and humility sufficient for the tasks assigned to us.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle – *Pray for Us.*
Live Jesus in our Hearts. – Forever!

***Let us remember
That we are in the Holy presence of God***

Frederick Douglass: "In Search of Freedom"

Through prayer and introspection, Frederick Douglass tried to make sense of his enslavement on a Maryland plantation. This piece, calling out to God for deliverance, was taken from his riveting autobiography published seven years after his escape to freedom.



You are loosed from your moorings, and are free; I am fast in my chains and am a slave! You move merrily before the gentle gale and I sadly before the bloody whip!

You are freedom's swift-winged angels that fly round the world; I am confined in bands of iron! O that I were free! O, that I were on one of your gallant decks, and under your protecting wing!

Alas! Betwixt me and you, the turbid waters roll. Go on, go on. O that I could also go! Could I but swim! If I could fly! O, why was I born a man, of whom to make a brute! The glad ship is gone; she hides in the dim distance. I am left in the hottest hell of unending slavery. O God, save me! God deliver me! Let me be free! Is there any God?

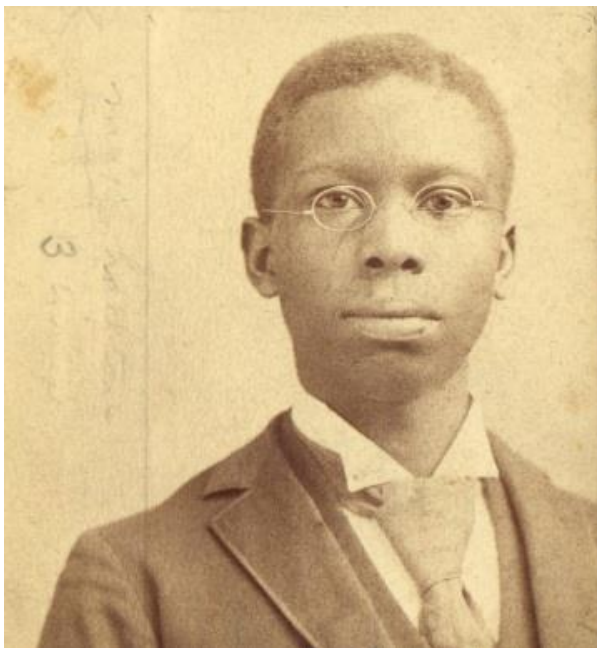
Why am I a slave? I will run away. I will not stand it. Get caught, or get clear. I'll try it. I had as well die with ague as the fever. I have only one life to lose. I had as well be killed running as die standing. Only think of it; one hundred miles straight north, and I am free! Yes! God helping me, I will.

**Saint John Baptist de La Salle – *Pray for Us.*
*Live Jesus in our Hearts. – Forever!***

***Let us remember
That we are in the Holy presence of God***

Paul Laurence Dunbar: "A Prayer"

The son of ex-slaves and a classmate of aviation pioneer Orville Wright, Paul Laurence Dunbar was the first African American to gain widespread fame as a poet. His ability to use different conversational dialects made his works accessible to a vast audience. This particular prayer was written as a personal retrospection not long before he died at the age of thirty-four, in 1906, from tuberculosis.



*O LORD, the hard-won miles
Have worn my stumbling feet:
Oh, soothe me with thy smiles,
And make my life complete.
The thorns were thick and keen
Where'er I trembling trod;*

*The way was long between
My wounded feet and God.
Where healing waters flow
Do thou my footsteps lead.
My heart is aching so;
Thy gracious balm I need.*

**Saint John Baptist de La Salle – *Pray for Us.*
*Live Jesus in our Hearts. – Forever!***

***Let us remember
That we are in the Holy presence of God***

A Prayer for Black History Month and Support for Hope

Loving God, who reigns on Earth as it is in Heaven
Father God Whom the prophet Isaiah called the Mother of Zion,
We come to you with humble and contrite hearts,

Asking for the repentance of our sins, both known and unknown,
Forgive us for our sins as well as forgive those who sin against us.
We pray that we can experience reconciliation, truth, and peace,
You, Oh God, are the God of Life, the Spirit of Freedom

You are the God of Moses, and the prophet Miriam, Harriet Tubman, and Trayvon Martin
and You, Oh God, through your Son, promised us that Jesus came to give us life abundant
Sustain us this day in the land of the living,

Spirit of Life, renew us, lead us and guide us to live in solidarity with the oppressed,
Empower us to live as life-giving witnesses of the Gospel,
For it is in His precious and matchless name we pray, Amen.

***Saint John Baptist de La Salle – Pray for Us.
Live Jesus in our Hearts. – Forever!***

Pygmy Prayer

*A prayer Christian done by Pygmy people in
Africa.*

***Let us remember
That we are in the holy presence of God***

In the beginning was God,
Today is God,
Tomorrow will be God.

Who can make an image of God?
He has no body.
He is the word which comes out of your
mouth.
That word!
It is no more,
It is past, and still it lives!
So is God.

**Saint John Baptist de La Salle
Pray for us**

Kikuyu Peace Prayer

Let us remember

That we are in the Holy presence of God

Praise ye Lord,

Peace be with us.

Say that the elders may have wisdom and speak with one voice.

Peace be with us.

Say that the country may have tranquillity.

Peace be with us.

And the people may continue to increase.

Peace be with us.

Say that the people and the flock and the herds

May prosper and be free from illness.

Peace be with us.

Say that the fields may bear much fruit

And the land may continue to be fertile.

Peace be with us.

May peace reign over earth,

May the gourd cup agree with vessel.

Peace be with us.

May their heads agree and every ill word be driven out

Into the wilderness, into the virgin forest.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle – Pray for Us.

Live Jesus in our Hearts. – Forever!

Ashanti Prayer for Blessing

Let us remember

That we are in the Holy presence of God

O Lord, O God,
creator Of Our land, our earth, the trees,
the animals and humans, all is for your honor
The drums beat it out, and people sing about it,
and they dance with noisy joy that you are the Lord.
You also have pulled the other continents out of the sea.
What a wonderful world you have made out of the wet mud,
and what beautiful men and women!
We thank you for the beauty of this earth.
The grace of your creation is like a cool day between rainy seasons.
We drink in your creation with our eyes.
We listen to the birds' jubilee with our ears.
How strong and good and sure your earth smells, and everything that grows there.
The sky above us is like a warm, soft Kente cloth, because you are behind it,
else it would be cold and rough and uncomfortable.
We drink in your creation and cannot get enough of it.
But in doing this we forget the evil we have done.
Lord, we call you, we beg you:
tear us away from our sins and our death.
This wonderful world fades away.
And one day our eyes snap shut, and all is over and dead that is not from you.
We are still slaves of the demons and the fetishes of this earth.
When we are not saved by you.
Bless us.
Bless our land and people.
Bless our forests with mahogany, wawa, and cacao.
Bless our fields with cassava and peanuts.
Bless the waters that flow through our land.
Fill them with fish and drive great schools of fish to our seacoast,
so that the fishermen in their unsteady boats do not need to go out too far.
Be with us youth in our countries, and in all Africa, and in the whole world.
Prepare us for the service that we should render.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle – *Pray for Us.*

Live Jesus in our Hearts. – Forever!

Prayer for Courage

Let us remember

That we are in the Holy presence of God

Here, on the pulse of this fine day
You may have the courage
To look up and out upon me. . .
Here on the pulse of this new day
You may have the grace to look up and out And into your sister's eyes,

Into your brother's face, And say simply
Very simply
With hope, Good Morning.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle – *Pray for Us.*

Live Jesus in our Hearts. – Forever!

Prayer of Acceptance

Let us remember

That we are in the Holy presence of God

Gracious and loving God,
we thank you for being a companion on our journey. In a world where there is a great deal of
indifference, we thank you for welcoming all us just as we are
and making us feel at home.
We pray that you will transform us
and make us the people you want us to be.
We pray all this through Christ our Saviour.
Amen.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle – *Pray for Us.*

Live Jesus in our Hearts. – Forever!