

## **A Vigil for Racial Justice, after the murder of George Floyd**

Co-sponsored by:  
Benedictines Sisters of Erie;  
Erie NAACP;  
Inter-Church Ministries  
Erie NETWORK Grassroots Advocates;  
The Social Justice and Life Office, Diocese of Erie;  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas NYPPAW  
Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern PA;

### **Opening Hymn:**

Let Justice Roll Like A River

Let justice roll like a river,  
And wash all oppression away  
Come, O God, and take us  
Move and shake us  
Come now and make us anew  
That we may live justly, like you.

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### **Introduction**

We join in prayer, mourning the murders of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota on May 25th, Ahmaud Arbery in Glynn County, Georgia on February 23rd, Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky on March 13th, as well as the lynchings of so many other Black people and people of color. We stand in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement, and pray for the safety and success of all those who work for and seek racial justice. We ask that God would give this nation “a new heart and put a new spirit in it; taking away the hearts of stone and giving hearts of flesh,” that all those who perpetrate and who benefit from systems of racism would experience an awakening and be moved to work for justice. In the words of James Cone, “A Christian is one who is striving for liberation.” As we pray, let us ask the Holy One to reveal to us actions we can commit to taking, in this moment and in the weeks and years ahead, to uphold our commitment to strive for liberation.

### **Psalm 10**

Why, my God, do you stay so far away?  
Why do you hide in these bitter times?  
Wickedness swells up,  
The oppressed are worn down.

Oh God, rise up. Reach out your hands,  
remembering your wounded people.  
Oh people, do not scorn our Maker,  
saying, “God does not see this wickedness.”

For God watches over all toil and labor,

And sees each moment of anguish.  
God, You restore what was lost,  
giving to the poor with Your own hands.  
Orphans cling to You for comfort.

Tear us away from the power of wickedness,  
show us the emptiness of violence.  
Our God reigns forever and ever,  
in every nation, over all wandering people.

You listen to the longing and the suffering,  
and steady their hearts.  
Your reign is justice for those crushed by mourning,  
Turn all hearts away from oppression.

(translated by Jacqueline Sanchez-Small, Benedictine Sisters of Erie)

## SILENT REFLECTION

### **Prayers of petition**

Response: Turn our hearts to you, O God.

We pray for George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, for the countless victims of lynchings and hate crimes, and for all those who loved them. May they be remembered for their gifts, for the joy they brought to their communities, for their full personhood, and not simply for the tragedies of their murders. May their families know comfort and peace in the midst of their mourning.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, who died condemned: **Turn our hearts to you, O God.**

We pray for Black people and people of color, who suffer from the systems of racism present in our land in many forms. We pray especially for those who live in fear of racist violence, and for those who have endured attacks because of their race. May they find healing and safety, and may their voices be heard as they share their stories.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, who came to set us free: **Turn our hearts to you, O God.**

We pray for those of us who are White, and for those who have never been the victim of racial discrimination or unjust policing. May our eyes be opened to the suffering of our siblings in Christ, may our hearts be broken, and may we yearn for justice. May we learn, listen, and use our privilege to help end white supremacy and all forms of oppression.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, model of perfect love: **Turn our hearts to you, O God.**

We pray for all perpetrators of racism and violence, and all who have enabled oppression and violence. May we may come to recognize the sacredness of each child of God, and repent for the damage done to people of color. May we find the courage and the grace to change ourselves and our societies.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, the Redeemer: **Turn our hearts to you, O God.**

## SILENT REFLECTION

### **Scripture: Matthew 5: 3-10**

Jesus began to teach the crowds, saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn,  
for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,  
for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful,  
for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure of heart,  
for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

### **SILENT REFLECTION**

### **Come Holy Spirit**

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.  
And kindle in them the fire of your love.  
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.  
And you will renew the face of the earth.

God,  
by the light of the Holy Spirit  
you have taught the hearts of your faithful.  
In the same Spirit  
help us to relish what is right  
and always rejoice in your consolation.  
We ask this through Christ our Savior.  
Amen.

### **Closing Prayer**

As we go forth to love and serve your people, God, grant us insight, courage, stamina, and humility. You have begun a good work in this struggle for racial justice. May it be brought to

completion, so that all people may be free from racism and the fear, violence, and humiliation it creates, and instead enjoy life in abundance.

### **Let Justice Roll Like A River**

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Move and shake us  
Come now and make us anew  
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