



**JUNETEENTH TOOLKIT FOR PASTORS**

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE**

Dear Pastor and Faith Community,

Juneteenth marks a time in history that has remained largely unknown within the white community. It has long been celebrated among the African American community. The brutal history of slavery and segregation continues to inflict pain on our society, and Juneteenth offers a light of hope on the fight for freedom and justice.

As noted by the National Museum of African American History & Culture, Juneteenth is a time to celebrate, to gather as a family, to reflect on the past and look to the future. Within the African American community, Juneteenth is known as our second “Independence Day”. It is a holiday that commemorates the June 19, 1865 announcement of the abolition of slavery in Texas, and more generally the emancipation of African American slaves throughout the Confederate South.

Emancipation did not finally come until General Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas and issued General Order No. 3, on June 19, almost two and a half years after President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863.

Celebrated on June 19, the word is a portmanteau of “June” and “nineteenth.” The Black Catholic Advisor Circle of the Archdiocese of Seattle invites all of us to celebrate this day as a reminder of the transformative power of human liberation.

With President Joe Biden’s signing legislation into law in 2021, Juneteenth is now officially known as Juneteenth National Independence Day and is a US Federal holiday. Please share this information with your parish and support the opportunity to learn more about our American history.

We encourage all to spend time with our families, reflecting on the meaning of the day by using this as a day of education about our collective history and taking the time to pray for real change.

We have included some materials and suggestions for you to use to celebrate Juneteenth along with some links to resources. Thank you for supporting this endeavor.

Members of the Black Catholic Advisory Circle

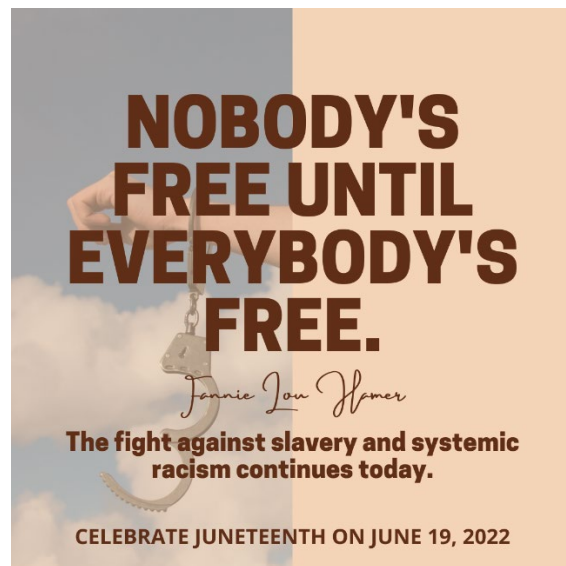
## Juneteenth Bulletin Announcement



Juneteenth is the oldest celebration that commemorates the end of slavery in the United States. It is a celebration of continued societal progress and respect for all cultures and people.

The core message of freedom for all continues to live on with the annual celebration of this historic day in United States history. It is a day of reflection, a day of renewal, a pride filled day. It is a moment in time taken to appreciate the African American experience. It is inclusive of all races, ethnicities, and nationalities. It is a day to build coalitions that enhance all communities. On Juneteenth, we come together young and old to listen, to learn and to refresh the drive to achieve. It is a day

where we all take one step closer to better utilize the energy wasted on racism. Juneteenth is a day that we pray for peace and Liberty for all.



## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Presider:

As we celebrate at this liturgy, let us remember the paths taken that have brought us here now to this place and time of celebration.

Deacon/Reader

O God, enable us to find in Christ the faith to trust your care even in the midst of pain. Assure us that we do not walk alone through the valley of the shadow, but that your light is leading us into life.

### **Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer**

O God, where hearts are fearful and constricted, grant courage and hope. Where anxiety is infectious and widening, grant peace and reassurance. Where impossibilities close every door and window, grant imagination and resistance. Where distrust twists our thinking, grant healing and illumination. Where spirits are daunted and weakened, grant soaring wings and strengthened dreams.

### **Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer**

O God, call us into a deeper relationship to be your church for the sake of the world. Help us to see with new eyes the injustices within church and society. Call us to have a loving heart that respects and uplifts the humanity and dignity of every person; open our ears to listen to and learn from the experiences of people of color. Open our mouths to speak up and about injustices. Join us with others to work for racial equity and inclusion for all people.

### **Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer**

Presider:

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son. Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred that infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unites us in bonds of love; and, through our struggle and confusion, work to accomplish your purposes on earth; so that, in your good time, every people and nation may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne, through Christ our Lord. AMEN

## **JUNETEENTH PRAYER**

*We pray, O Lord, for change.*

*Jesus you revealed God through your wise words and loving deeds,  
and we encounter you still today in the faces of those whom society has  
pushed to the margins.*

*Guide us, through the love you revealed,*

*to establish the justice you proclaimed,*

*that all peoples might dwell in harmony and peace,*

*united by that one love that binds us to each other, and to you.*

*And most of all, Lord, change our routine worship and work into genuine  
encounter with you and our better selves so that our lives will be changed for the  
good of all.*

*Amen*

Prayer adapted from Racial Healing and Liturgical Resources.

### RESOURCES FOR UNDERSTANDING AND TEACHING ABOUT JUNETEENTH

What is Juneteenth? <https://www.juneteenth.com/>

How do you celebrate Juneteenth. <https://articles.bento-live.pbs.org/articles/2019/06/how-do-you-celebrate-juneteenth/>

What to know about the holiday.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2021/06/15/juneteenth-2021-history-holiday-how-celebrate/7633328002/>

Grappling with America's legacy of slavery.

<https://www.vox.com/identities/2018/6/19/17476482/juneteenth-holiday-emancipation-african-american-celebration-history>

So You Want to Learn About Juneteenth? <https://www.nytimes.com/article/juneteenth-day-celebration.html>

Celebration and Mourning <https://littlevillagemag.com/celebration-and-mourning-at-ic-area-juneteenth/>

**Abernathy, Mullen, Governor; *Juneteenth Texas: Essays in African American Folklore*, University of Texas Press, (2010).** Juneteenth Texas explores African American folkways and traditions from both African American and white perspectives. Included are descriptions and classifications of different aspects of African American folk culture in Texas; explorations of songs and stories and specific performers such as Lightnin' Hopkins, Manse Lipscomb, and Bongo Joe; and a section giving resources for the further study of African Americans in Texas.

**Garza, Alicia; *The Purpose of Power, One World*, (2021).** An essential guide to building transformative movements to address the challenges of our time, from one of the country's leading organizers and a co-creator of Black Lives Matter.

**Reed, Annette Gordon; *On Juneteenth, Liveright*, (2021).** The essential, sweeping story of Juneteenth's integral importance to American history, as told by a Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and Texas native.

**Willis, Deborah & Krauthamer, Barbara; *Envisioning Emancipation*, Temple University Publishing, (2017).** Published on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, this book uses rarely seen images to illuminate what the road to freedom looked like in the Civil War era. The authors vividly display the seismic impact of emancipation on African Americans born before and after the Proclamation, providing a perspective on freedom and slavery and a way to understand the photos as documents of engagement, action, struggle, and aspiration.

### **Activity books for children**

**Juneteenth Book for Kids | Liberty & Justice for All !: On Juneteenth History and Activities Book for Children from 7 Years Old, Social Justice Books for Kids by Green Owl**

**The Ultimate Juneteenth Activity Book For Kids & Young Scholars - ELA, U.S. History, and Art Freedom Day Activities for Kids Grades 2 to 6 - Black History**  
by K. S. Daniels (Author)

**All Different Now: Juneteenth, the First Day of Freedom Hardcover – Picture Book,**  
by Angela Johnson (Author), E.B. Lewis (Illustrator)

### **VIDEOS**

Racial Justice and Call to Action <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQNZsP7utZ0>

Recognizing Juneteenth <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0l3MBzg8RQ>

Educational videos about Juneteenth for kids

<https://coolmompicks.com/blog/2020/06/19/videos-about-juneteenth-for-kids/>

## TIPS FOR JUNETEENTH HOMILY

Tip: Sermon Given at a United Church of Christ

..... I am not surprised, really, that I had no idea about Juneteenth. The fact that I was not exposed to a celebration that was meaningful to many African Americans was just another part of the majority narrative that I was exposed to—one that gave priority and preference to the history of whites, and not of persons of color or Native Americans or of women or any perceived minority.

Our bible is rich in slave narrative. At various times in history, that slave narrative has been used to justify chattel slavery and unhealthy power-dynamics between various tribes, races, and peoples. However, our bible is also rich in narratives of liberation which is one reason why many slave owners forbid slaves going to church or the resident slave preacher preaching anything other than obedience to the master of the plantation lest the slaves rebel. Within its complex narratives, the Bible explores the dynamics of relationship and freedom, containing powerful stories of God's leaders and liberators— Moses, Jesus, and yes, Mary were liberators to those enslaved by powers and principalities that would bind and oppress the human spirit and human heart.

Our Hebrew and Christian forebears thought it important to teach their children about God's presence, power, and action even in the midst of enslavement while helping those enslaved to tap into God's Spirit to encourage their own disheartened spirits and to empower them. Enslavement is a hard word these days to discuss in mixed groups. For many people, enslavement is something to leave behind, an idea that belongs only to the sad dust of the past. For these, the slavery issue was settled long ago, at least in certain overt forms. Yet, depending on who you talk to, slavery is alive and well in the human heart, if not in its physical form, such as chattel slavery and the like, then in more subtle and insidious forms.

Tip: Religion and race ... The General Commission on Religion and Race

The symbolic meaning of the delayed emancipation for Black Americans is pertinent to the Christian church and the fuller society today. Like the story of the widow's mite (Mark 12:1-44, Luke 21:1-4, wherein Jesus praises a widow for giving her two cents aka mites at Temple, saying she has given more than the rich, as she has given her whole livelihood), we serve a God who bids us leave no one behind. Our call is to take the Good News of Christ's salvation, liberation, and release for all people into the world. Yet, systemic racism in church and society continues to impact our ability to be faithful followers of Christ and the repairers of the breach.

As we still, in this moment, grapple with anti-Blackness and other forms of racism, Juneteenth reminds us that the quest for liberty, flourishing, and justice for all remains elusive. The events of the past few years painfully illustrate this point: from the murders of Black and Brown people, such as George Floyd and Breonna Taylor at the hands of police officers, to the dramatic rise in hate crimes aimed at Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and to attempts to repress Latinx immigrants. All demonstrate that systemic and individual racism still costs souls and lives.

As writer Jess McIntosh [writes](#), "We are still in the process of ending slavery, and nowhere near ending its effects."

Let Juneteenth be a time when people of Christian faith—especially white Christians—recommit to, evoke, stand on, and live out the promises of God to deliver all people everywhere from bondage and oppression. Just as God walked the Israelites to freedom and flourishing, God stands on the side of oppressed people in this moment. And God's people are called to roll down justice (Amos 5:24) and to model and champion righteousness like an endless stream.

Homily – Deacon Joseph Connor – St James Cathedral – June 19, 2020

Second Reading

1John 4:12-16

We heard in today's second reading .... No one has ever seen God. Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us.

Now just what does that mean?

**It means that the unseen God, who was historically revealed in Jesus Christ in a human body, lives in us and is revealed by the permanent presence of His Holy Spirit in us when we love God, when we love ourselves and when we love one another.**

**That is a powerful revelation!**

So, **People do not see God!** But people **can see His Holy Spirit in us when** we show love.

Some people may not believe this, Why? Because they see us, they see me, they see you, they read our every movement, our every attitude, our every interaction with one another.

Just what do they see?

When people act in ways that expresses love, kindness, compassion, patience, peace, people will .... See God's abiding love in us.

We cannot see God's abiding love when people act in ways that are hateful, racist and violent. What we see is that people have failed to love one another. And failed to show God's abiding presence.

Now Abiding means long lasting and permanent. Abiding love, abiding presence that which makes us one, whole and impartial.

PAUSE

The outcry of George Floyd's death was horrific, however, the most horrific of all is having four officers stand around watching, "like business as usual". This was a clear example of institutional systemic racism that has been long lasting and permanent.

PAUSE

My sisters and brother, our **catholic social teachings** have provided us all that we need to demonstrate God's abiding love. That is not enough.

**Unless** our Catholic Social teachings teaches a relationship between doctrine and its purpose and meaning in the real world that includes how we treat our black and brown brothers and sisters, we cannot eradicate racism and injustice.



**Unless** our Catholic Social teachings teaches a relationship that includes not only the sanctity of the unborn but, the sanctity of the life of a Black or brown person, we cannot begin to eradicate racism and injustice

**Unless** our Catholic Social teachings teaches a relationship between race, cultural, power and social privilege, we cannot begin to eradicate racism and injustice

PAUSE

My sisters and brothers .....

People DO NOT see God. What they see is people like me, a human being made in the image and likeness of **God who should not be prejudged, hanged, shot, suffocated, and left to die with no regard to the sanctity of my life.**

PAUSE

Often we reject the love of God **and** we have done so throughout our **human history**. Our Vicar of Clergy, Father Zender, in his thoughts about today's Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the commemoration of Juneteenth he stated

Today we commemorate an important date **in American history, "Juneteenth"** the day when Black slaves in Texas first heard the Emancipation Proclamation as it was read to them on June 19, 1865. They had been living **in slavery needlessly** for over two years since the document was issued on January 1, 1863.

PAUSE

Father Zender's question to all of us ..... is this

**Could the fact that the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Juneteenth fall on the same day this year ..... could it be God ...speaking to the Catholic Church of Western Washington in 2020 .... to raise up our voices in prayer to ask the Sacred Heart of Jesus to pour out healing love from his Heart on our nation broken by racism?**

PAUSE

And I will add this question, is God speaking to us to pour out our love for Him by our efforts, authentic efforts, to eradicate racism?

Are we being asked to demonstrate the love of the Sacred Heart through..... **Mature Faith?**

- Mature faith that sees God in those we meet.
- Mature faith that respects the Life and Dignity of the Human Person.
- Mature faith that Cares for God's creation
- Mature faith that seeks together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.
- Mature faith that stands up to protect and Defend the Rights of Human Beings
- Mature faith that holds each other Accountable
- Mature faith that calls you my Catholic brothers and sisters to stand up as a Catholic Community against racial injustice. AND
- Mature faith that demands us to vote for one nation under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all

Pause

My sisters and brothers ....People don't see God! ..... they see us.

And we are right now being **called to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God!**

PAUSE

Archbishop Etienne in his statement on Racism strongly encourages our parishes to make every effort possible to pray and to act so that we may be a faith-filled part of the solution to the sin of racism.

By looking through the lens of the Sacred Heart of Jesus our actions can become a powerful catalyst to bring about justice, peace, and an end to racism.

**And Why? Because the unseen God,**

**who was historically revealed in the incarnation of the Son,**

**must be, ..... must be ...revealed by the permanent presence of His**

**Holy Spirit in us, His people.**

Amen

# JUNETEENTH

## A CALL TO ACTION

Before we can celebrate Juneteenth, we as a country must do better at living into its promise.

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. In our society, human life is under direct attack from the inhumane and long-term effects of systemic racism.

We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.

So, on Juneteenth, we recommit to the work that needs to be done for reconciliation to address and correct our participation in unjust structures. To fully embody our belief in the life and dignity of every human person.

And, while we persist in these endeavors, we do not forget our mission to meet our community's immediate needs in the Archdiocese of Seattle offering care, food, shelter and other services to all who require it.

Every day, let us honor the dignity in every person and work to fulfill the promise of Juneteenth.

Excerpts from Msgr. John J. Enzler, President and CEO of Catholic Charities

CATHOLICS CELEBRATE  
**JUNETEENTH**

— DAY OF FREEDOM —



**JUNE 19**

DAY OF RECOGNITION

DAY OF RESTORATION

DAY OF CELEBRATION