



DIOCESE OF GARY

9292 BROADWAY
MERRILLVILLE, IN 46410-7088

PHONE: (219) 769-9292
FAX: (219) 738-9034

CONTACTS:

Colleen McGinty-Rabine, Director of Communications
crabine@dcgary.org | (219) 702-9354

Vanessa Negrete, Digital and Social Media
vnegrete@dcgary.org | (219) 588-4957

Chancery/Pastoral Center

- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -
September 4, 2020

Catholics invited to fast, pray to support peace and end racism

MERRILLVILLE – Catholics in the Diocese of Gary will join others across the United States on Sept. 9 for a day of prayer and fasting in support of peace and an end to racism.

The Most Rev. Robert J. McClory, Bishop of Gary, is encouraging local Catholics to examine their conscience, to repent and seek reparation of their soul, in light of the sin of racism. Catholics view prayer and fasting as acts of repentance and reparation.

“As our nation continues to be confronted with racial tension and civil unrest, we might be tempted to believe ourselves powerless to respond,” said Bishop McClory. “However, we can all respond on a personal level – and that personal transformation can lend itself to communal engagement.”

The Sept. 9 date is significant because it is the feast day of Saint Peter Claver, a Jesuit priest who lived from 1580-1654 and ministered to slaves as they arrived on the slave ships in Columbia. He is the patron saint of interracial justice and African Americans.

“With hearts renewed, we then ask the Lord to inspire us to become beacons of hope and light to others,” Bishop McClory said. “We start with ourselves, and then ask the Lord how we can be a channel of His love and mercy to a hurting world.”

The Bishop recommends using the questions shared by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to begin the process of examination. These thought-provoking questions guide the examiner to reflect on their actions, their thoughts, and their biases. Questions include:

Have I done enough to inform myself about the sin of racism, its roots, and its historical and contemporary manifestations? Have I opened my heart to see how unequal access to economic opportunity, jobs, housing, and education based on skin color, race, or ethnicity, has denied, and continues to deny the equal dignity of others? Is there a root of racism within me that blurs my vision of who my neighbor is?

Bishop McClory will begin Wednesday with a 7 a.m. Prayer Service at the Cathedral and follow with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. The Cathedral will be open to the public, offering visitors the opportunity for Adoration and prayer, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. when Fr. Surufka, administrator for the Cathedral, will conclude the day with Benediction at 5 p.m. and Mass at 5:30 p.m.

“I welcome everyone to sign up to attend the day’s activities or, if you are unable to attend in person, to view the livestream,” encouraged Bishop McClory. Links for the livestream and sign-up for the day’s activities are available through the diocesan website, dcgary.org.

Bishop Shelton J. Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism offered his perspective on what we are trying to accomplish on this day:

“In the midst of our country’s ongoing racial unrest, we restate our commitment to peacefully seeking racial justice. ... We reiterate the value of those whose human life and dignity in this country are marginalized through racism and our need to fight for them including the unborn. [On September 9, a day of fasting and prayer], we urge Catholics to consider attending the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and offer your participation in reparation for sins of racism to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We invite the faithful to also consider praying the rosary, the USCCB’s Prayer Service for Racial Healing, and for the intercession of the saints who have fought for racial equality such as St. Katharine Drexel and St. Peter Claver. We must continue to engage the battle against the current evils of our society ...”

###