



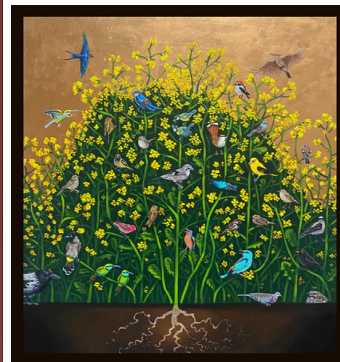
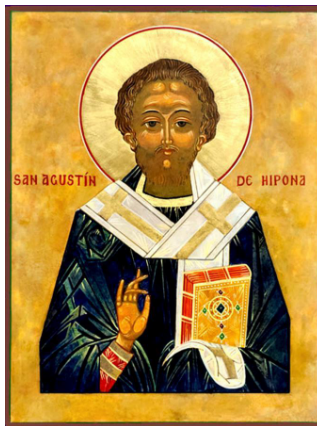
Prayer Vigil to Mark the 60th Anniversary of the “I Have A Dream” speech of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Delivered on the Feast of Saint Augustine, August 28, 1963

An Evening of Prayers, Songs and Reflections

Rosemont Chapel

Sunday, August 27, 2023

6 PM



Welcome: Anne Minicozzi

Opening Prayer: ALL

(Please stand)

Wake Me Up Lord

Wake me up Lord, so that the evil of racism
finds no home within me.

Keep watch over my heart Lord,
and remove from me any barriers to your grace,
that may oppress and offend my brothers and sisters.

Fill my spirit Lord, so that I may give
services of justice and peace.

Clear my mind Lord, and use it for your glory.

And finally, remind us Lord that you said,
"blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called children of God."

Amen.

Opening Song: #470 Somebody's Knocking at Your Door

(Please be seated)

Reading and Reflection #1

We gather together as an Augustinian community of faith, to commemorate the historic March on Washington on August 28, 1963. We begin with some of the words from Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous "I Have A Dream" speech, words of profound importance that can be felt across time, resonating today much as they did 60 years ago.

"We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism.

Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

*It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. **1963 is not an end, but a beginning.** Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual."*

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 13:31-32 and 17:13-22)

He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” He said to them, “Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move: and nothing will be impossible for you.”



The Parable of the Mustard Seed Icon By Kelly Latimore

Reflection (Eilise Rouse):

As I reflect on both the words of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the parable this evening, I share these thoughts:

Are we sitting here tonight, asking much as the disciples did in the parable of the Mustard Seed: “Why could we not have cast “it,” meaning racism, out by now?”

Martin Luther King’s words, now six decades later, reverberate across time. What is our relationship with the time that has passed since these words of such magnitude were first spoken? How has this passage of time brought us into a new relationship with these words? Can we celebrate the strides we have made as a country, while simultaneously recognizing just how far we have yet to go?

While laws of the civil rights era desegregated much of American public life, the sin of racism and the dehumanization that undergirds it continue. How distant and dismissed many fellow citizens still feel, their need and cry over the course of 60 years often going unseen and unheard.

How distant are we all from our own humanity when we ignore the pain of others? On every level that we organize and bond together as humans be it personally, interpersonally, culturally or structurally, we must ask as the Gospel does “why could we not have cast it out”?

The deep conviction of Reverend King was that 1963 was not to be an end but a beginning. Laws may have changed, but has there been a concerted effort, especially by the white community that many of us here represent, to truly begin to cast racism out, to thoroughly change our hearts and our minds when it comes to racism? How have we as a country remained distant from King’s words? Did we simply rest on laws to make change and neglect our own role in upholding, especially as Christians called to live, the principles of hospitality, justice and solidarity?

As much as we hold lawmakers accountable to protect and uphold the inherent rights we hold dear, how can we everyday civilians hold ourselves responsible for healing the woundedness of our racial history and the ongoing wounds of racial strife, bigotry and fear?

Jesus, the prophet of peace and repair, calls within us, pulls us forward through time to believe in our capacity as his disciples to repair, to heal, to change our all too human and often prejudiced and closed minds and hearts.

As Catholics in an Augustinian community taught to uphold justice, how can we hold ourselves accountable? How have we remained distant from Jesus's call to repair?

How can we speak up in the face of dismissal or indifference to our shared racial history in daily life whether in our homes, our workplaces and beyond? How can we face the challenge of changing, to act in a way that grows us more like Jesus rooted in Love and Faith?

How may we use King's example and exercise our moral imagination to act, to "lift ourselves from the desolate valley" to "the sunlit path of racial justice"? How may we involve ourselves in racial healing, place our full selves up close and personally to encounter one another more than mere moralizing, pointing the finger of blame outside ourselves and remaining at a distance?

How can we creatively respond, just as Jesus asks of us in this parable, to "move from here to there" to do what in our minds we feel impossible but what even just a mustard seed of Faith makes possible?

Time for silent reflection

Second Prayer: Jericho Road (Dave McCarraher)

Introduction: A true revolution of values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our past and present policies. We are called to play the Good Samaritan on life's road side, but that will be only an initial act. One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life's highway. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it is not haphazard and superficial. Compassion sees that an edifice that produces beggars needs restructuring. A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth.

PAUSE

Let us all join in prayer:

Ever present God, you called us to be in relationship with one another and promised to dwell wherever two or three are gathered. In our community, we are many different people; we come from many different places, have many different cultures. Open our hearts that we may be bold in finding the riches of inclusion and the treasures of diversity among us. We pray in faith. Amen.

- Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Second Song: "O Beauty, Ever Ancient" (#90 in small hymnal)

(Please stand)

**Readings and Reflection #2 - Jim Wetzel, Director of the Augustinian Institute,
Villanova University**

Readings of Augustine: "We are the times"

So that's why I'm saying, dear brothers and sisters, pray as much as you can. Evils abound, and God has willed that evils should abound. If only evil people didn't abound, then evils wouldn't abound. The times are evil, the times are troubled, that's what people say. Let us live good lives, and the times are good. We are the times. Whatever we are like, that's what the times are like.

SERMON 80 (circa 410)

The sacrifice offered to God is a broken spirit; God will not despise a heart that is broken and humbled. (civ. 10.5)

...true sacrifices are acts of compassion, whether towards ourselves or towards our neighbors, when they are directed towards God; and acts of compassion are intended to free us from misery and thus to bring us to blessedness—which is only attained by that good of which it has been said, ‘As for me, my true good is to cling to God.’ This being so, it immediately follows that the whole redeemed community, that is to say, the congregation and fellowship of the saints, is offered to God as a universal sacrifice, through the great priest who offered himself in his suffering for us—so that we might be the body of so great a head—under the form of a servant.

(civ. 10.7; cf. Romans 12: 3-8)

From *De civitate Dei* (City of God), book X

Genesis 1:31

And God saw all that He had done, and, look, it was very good. And it was evening, and it was morning, the sixth day.

Reflections on Augustine

How is it true today that "we are the times," that "whatever we are like, the times are like"?

How can we apply this to our current needs for racial healing and solidarity?

How, according to Augustine, are we made for this work of compassion and repair?

Time for Silent Reflection

Reading and Reflection #3: Ritual of the Mustard Seed

**God has given us all that we need,
Faith the size of a mustard seed
Is enough. With God's help
We are adequate to any task.
But do I have faith in my gift of faith?
How might I go forth today
To love and serve the Lord?
To become a more vocal member of Dr. King's "beloved community"?
To become a more active citizen in Saint Augustine's City of God?**

Beginning from the back, let each person choose a piece of incense and as though it were your mustard seed of faith, let us each place it in the censer, thanking God for the gift of faith given to us, and letting the fragrance of our faith remind us that God provides all we need so we can do well the work of racial justice.

While we process slowly to the censer and then slowly return to our pews, let's join in singing "Guide My Feet".

Song: # 780 Guide My Feet

Shake Us From Our Slumber (Bruce Lockett, St. Cyprian)

When our eyes do not see the gravity of racial justice,
Shake us from our slumber and open our eyes, O Lord.

When out of fear we are frozen into inaction,
Give us a spirit of bravery, O Lord.

When we try our best but say the wrong things,
Give us a spirit of humility, O Lord.

When the chaos of this dies down,
Give us a lasting spirit of solidarity, O Lord.

When it becomes easier to point fingers outwards,
Help us to examine our own hearts, O Lord.

God of truth, in your wisdom, Enlighten Us.
God of hope in your kindness, Heal Us.
Creator of All People, in your generosity, Guide Us.

Racism breaks your heart,
break our hearts for what breaks yours, O Lord. Amen.
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Closing Song: #817 We Shall Overcome

Verses 1, 2 and 3

On behalf of St. Thomas of Villanova's Anti-Racism Committee, we thank you for your participation in this service.

Committee co-chairs Eilise Rouse and Dave McCarraher



QR Code Booklet



QR Code
Anti-Racism Web-page