Prayer Unites. Prayer Sustains. Prayer Moves Mountains.

National Day of Prayer
for Peace in Our Communities

History and Background

In 2016, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops called for a National Day of Prayer to be observed on September 9, the Memorial of St. Peter Claver, as a response to increased racial tensions. This initiative was introduced to foster honest and respectful dialogue, and to promote reconciliation, within communities facing heightened tensions.

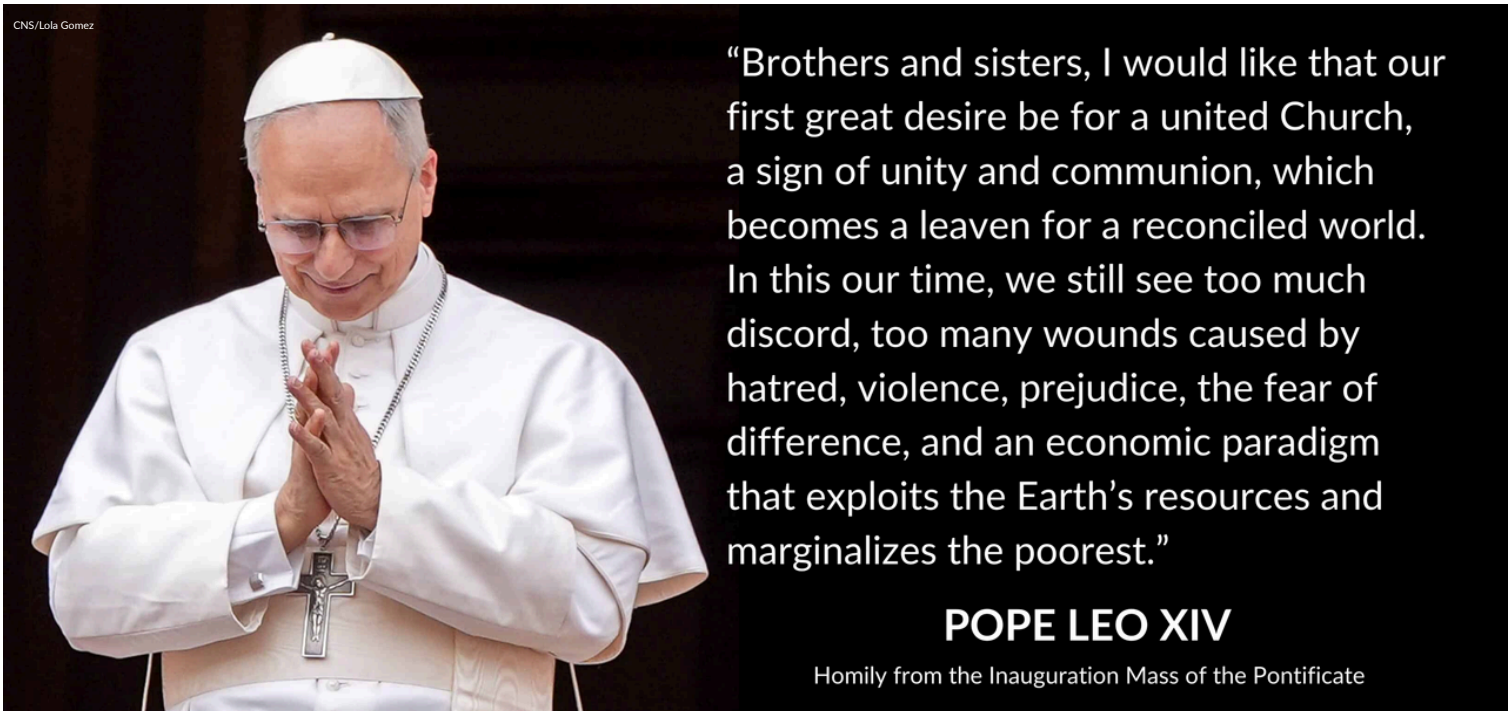
Why September 9?

September 9 is the Memorial of St. Peter Claver, a Jesuit priest from Catalonia who served and ministered to enslaved Africans in Cartagena, Colombia for 38 years. St. Peter Claver baptized more than 300,000 people and called himself the "slave of the slaves forever". He died in 1654 and was canonized by Pope Leo XIII in 1888. He is the patron saint of African Americans and of enslaved peoples. The Memorial of St. Peter Claver is an occasion for heightened prayer and action to strive for peace in our communities.

Prayer Accomplishes Wonderful Things

Reflecting on this Day of Prayer for Peace, Bishop Joseph Perry, chairman of the Subcommittee for the Promotion of Racial Justice and Reconciliation, said: “We Christians believe that prayer accomplishes wonderful things for our families and communities. Prayer is the miracle salve for the ills of individuals as well as communities. The Lord Jesus promises that our prayer is heard by God. Let us never give up on prayer being able to bring us closer to God and to one another.”

“Therefore I tell you, all that you ask for in prayer, believe that you will receive it and it shall be yours.” (Mark 11:24)



Tools and Resources

The U.S. Bishops’ Subcommittee for the Promotion of Racial Justice and Reconciliation offers a range of prayer resources to support Catholics in seeking the conversion of hearts and to address the sin of racism. These materials are designed to guide parishes and individuals in meaningful prayer and reflection, especially on September 9th, the Feast of St. Peter Claver, and throughout the year.

We encourage you to explore and share the Subcommittee’s webpage on the Feast of St. Peter Claver, where you’ll find resources including:

- St. Peter Claver Prayer Service
- Memorial of St. Peter Claver Prayers of the Faithful
- Readings for the Memorial of St. Peter Claver
- Holy Hour Against Racism
- Vespers for the Memorial of St. Peter Claver
- Excerpt on St. Peter Claver from In Plurimis
- Prayer for Peace in Our Communities

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Subcommittee for the Promotion of Racial Justice and Reconciliation

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