

PRAY ON MLK GUIDE

A liturgy for Incarnational Engagement



SHOW UP



BE CHANGED



BEAR
WITNESS

August 28, 2022

On this day, 59 years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke these words,

"I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day."

Dr. King's famous "I Have A Dream" speech was given a 100 years after the emancipation proclamation was signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln. The ending of slavery did not mean the ending of bondage. Government mandated racial segregation created a disproportionate experience of poverty in black and brown communities. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. saw this inequity as another system of oppression. Today, San Antonio is one of the most economically segregated metropolitan cities in the United States. Where we stand the median household income is \$32,967.00

Welcome,

You've come to Martin Luther King Drive to enter into this story. Standing here today bears witness to this truth—God's dream of ethnic reconciliation, righteousness, and justice is still alive. Together we will stand in silent prayer, asking God to unlock our hearts and reveal the endowed power within His people to fulfill this dream. You will get the most out of this experience to the degree you are present within it. Right now, at this exact moment, we invite you to step in. If you could write a one-word prayer that shifted the trajectory of the story, then what would you write? You aren't sure, you say? No worries, take a moment to pray this prayer:

"Father, have mercy and grace upon my heart, our city, and this ground where I stand; what is your one-word dream for this moment in time and the place where I stand?"

Now, on the blank canvas of your white tape, write the first word that came to mind. Place this white tape somewhere on your person. Stand where you choose in silent prayer on Martin Luther King Drive. At 7:00 p.m., we'll reconvene at the intersection of South New Braunfels Ave & Martin Luther King Drive to break the silence in a shared song.

Use the following guide for your time of silent prayer on Martin Luther King Drive

Request for Humility

No matter where you come from, the journey into this story begins with humility. In humility, we approach God, asking for the grace to listen. Mediate on the following scripture and use the first 10 minutes of our silent prayer journey to ask God for humility, open ears, and the grace to remain with one another.

“Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.” Colossians 3:12 NLT

Write your prayer in the blank below, or pray it silently. Remember, this is not a prayer for your neighbor's humility but your own.

Suggested Prayer:

Father, I come here today unafraid. I am non-anxious because my identity is not threatened by the current pain, tensions, or circumstances. I am chosen by you, called holy, and dearly loved. My identity is intact without the threat of damage. I can engage complex spaces with grace, humility, and compassion because of your presence with me right now. I am not afraid; your rod and staff comfort me. I pray that goodness and mercy follow me along on this journey. Search my heart and give me the humility needed to be a willing participant in your story.

Selah -- Pause in His Presence

Take a few minutes to wait silently: allowing God to respond to your prayer.

Holding The Tension – Understanding The Strength Required

On our second stop in this journey, we'll get curious about why conversations around race, inequity, and poverty are so hard for us to have. We naturally desire to either dive in head first or run for the hills. We freeze, and we fret. We fight, and we remain silent. We come to this moment not to judge our actions but to explore them. To validate the hard and even take the hard before Jesus. We hope that by the end of this journey, your muscles will have added strength and capability to "hold the tension." In reconciliation and justice movements, the metaphor of a bridge is frequently used; however, it's harder to be a bridge than you may realize. Consider how much tension an actual bridge has to hold. The Golden Gate Bridge's main cables must handle 240 meganewtons of tension force! How much force is that? Well, the most powerful rocket ever built was the Saturn V rocket that took NASA to the moon. The amount of force produced at takeoff was legendary, a powerful show of fire, smoke, and sound. However, just *one* of the main cables of the Golden Gate could hold back seven Saturn V rockets blasting off at full force. With 14 Apollo program launches, the Golden Gate bridge maintains as much tension as the entire collective force of all the moon launch takeoffs. That is a lot of tension! If you've desired to be a bridge but have found it challenging. You are correct in your assessment. Being a bridge is hard because of the constant tension it bears. Christ holds this tension well and in Him you have the strength.

"Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible." Matthew 19:26 NLT

Mediate on the confession of Christ in Isaiah 61. Notice what stands out to you in your reading. How does this word impact your perspective of Jesus? How does it empower you?

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion— to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified. They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations." Isaiah 61:1-4 ESV

Becoming a Bridge

“And it will be said: “Build up, build up, prepare the road! Remove the obstacles out of the way of my people.” For this is what the high and exalted One says— he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.” Isaiah 57:14-15 NIV



Becoming a bridge begins by asking intentional questions. As you seek to answer each question, ask God to search your heart. We need Him to reveal what we can't see about ourselves.

What tensions do I struggle to hold?

When do I feel forced to pick a side?

How do I hold tension? What is my intuitive response?

When I break under pressure, what is my default temptation? Where do I go?

What obstacles do I see in the way?

Right now, how is Christ changing my perspective?

Where can I become a bridge?

New Storyline:

Spend time praying for the city of San Antonio (i.e., families, neighborhoods, schools, businesses, government officials, legal system, churches). Use Amos 5:24 as your springboard.

*“But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.
Amos 5:24 NASB*

Write your prayer in the blank below, or pray it silently.

Ask Jesus: How do you want to answer this prayer through me?

Blessing This Area

We are in the final moments of our silent prayer protest. We can think of no better way to end our time than with a blessing for the area where we've gathered. Pray for the families and local businesses to thrive. Pray for innovative ideas and new equitable systems that would benefit San Antonio's East Side.

Write out your blessing for this neighborhood and the surrounding area.