



## Independence Day & Celebrating our Interconnectedness July 6, 2020

Dear friends,

We humans are built for community. During this time of social distancing, it's crucial that we remain connected, holding one another in love and support. It's for this reason that **each week during the COVID-19 crisis, we'll be sending you a short resource** to use in a virtual meeting held over the phone or via video conferencing. This weekly resource is a great tool to stay connected with your current and past JFM small groups. It is also a great resource to use individually, or with groups of friends or family to stay connected and engaged in a meaningful way. These reflections will provide a time to pray together, check in with one another, and have conversation around a short passage.

In the meantime, we're offering tips and tools for facilitating all of our current programs through videoconferencing. While we hope that this weekly resource will spiritually sustain your community in our current context, [now is also the perfect time to start one of our regular programs](#). The call to seek justice is just as important now as ever!

Last but not least, generosity is, at its core, a benefit to everyone. When you donate today, your gift helps us sustain individuals committed to making the world better. [Click here to help out](#). Also, please feel free to forward this resource to friends and family!

Thank you for continuing to care for one another during this time of heightened anxiety. Know that we are praying for you!

Stay well,

The JustFaith Ministries Staff



## Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

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When everyone has dialed in, begin your time together with these or similar words:

Welcome, friends! It's so good to be with all of you, despite that we can't be together in person. Today we'll begin with prayer and spend a few minutes checking in with each other. Then we'll have some conversation around a short reflection before closing in prayer. Most importantly, though, this will be a time to care for one another and to be the community we're called to be.

Let's take a few seconds of silence to pause, to listen to our breathing, and to be present in this space.

*Pause for 30 seconds before beginning the opening prayer.*

### Peace Within

May today there be peace within.

May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.

May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.

May you be confident knowing you are a child of God.

Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love.

It is there for each and every one of us.

- *St. Therèse of Lisieux and St. Theresa of Avila*

[\[https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/morning-and-new-beginnings-prayers\]](https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/morning-and-new-beginnings-prayers)

## Check-In Time (10 minutes or so)

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Ask these open-ended questions. If you're by yourself, journal about them.

*Note: If you're with a group, these questions have the potential to take up a lot of time. Some weeks may require more check-in time than others, depending on the needs of the group. To provide a shorter yet meaningful check-in time, choose ONE of the questions below, and ask participants to share a ONE sentence response.*

- **Before we begin this week's reflection, let's take a few minutes to check in. How is everyone feeling?** (It will be a bit more difficult via phone to know if someone is



being talked over or is trying to get a word in.... Be sure everyone has a chance to speak).

- What is something you're struggling with this week?
- Where have you seen a sign of hope this week?

*Other optional questions include: What is something you've learned about yourself during this time of social distancing? Where have you experienced a "thin place" in the last week? Where have you seen beauty this week? What is one new behavior you'd like to continue doing when the virus has passed us by?*

## Reflection (15 minutes or so)

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Introduce the reflection time with these or similar words:

**Since COVID-19 has emerged in our reality, many have talked about the interconnectedness of the human family. Suddenly, we are reminded of how deeply we are all connected and how inevitably our destinies are bound to one another's. COVID is reminding us of that by making us vulnerable; can we learn from it and become stronger in our interconnectedness? We just celebrated Independence Day, yet we are more than ever connected with the rest of the world. Let's take some time to reflect on global interconnectedness and what it may mean for our near future.**

Read the following excerpt from an article written in April by Lise Kingo, CEO & Executive Director of the United Nations Global Compact [the full article can be found here: <https://www.greenbiz.com/article/what-world-could-look-after-covid-19>].

*So far we have learned (whether we like it or not) that we are completely interconnected and interdependent — and that without solidarity, especially with the most vulnerable among us, we all will lose.*

[...]

*The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us an important lesson about ourselves as a human community: We are interconnected with and interdependent on each other in ways we did not fully understand before.*

*My health and well-being are dependent on your health and well-being, and the same principle applies beyond borders and regions. Indeed, our collective health defines the health of*

*businesses and economies within and across nations. This new awareness has born a sense of solidarity and interdependency that I have found heartwarming. Clearly, we care about each other.*

[...]

*The COVID-19 pandemic is sweeping the world in the same year that the United Nations is commemorating its 75th anniversary. There is a lot of hope in that.*

*It reminds us that we as a human community are able to lift ourselves up from our deepest and darkest hour to rebuild a new and better world on a set of shared values and principles. The United Nations was founded in the wake of two devastating world wars with the understanding that to save future generations from the atrocities of war, nations must come together in multilateral cooperation to protect the dignity and worth of every human being. That vision is as relevant and important in the wake of this pandemic as it was then.*

After reading these lines, reflect on the following or similar questions:

1. What positive signs of solidarity have you witnessed in the past three months?
2. Has COVID-19 changed your vision of the global world and its interconnections?
3. Have you found ways to stand in solidarity with people around the world while limited in your own ability to physically move?
4. What is the role of the international community in this pandemic?

Bring the conversation to a close and conclude by reading the following biblical passage, 1 Corinthians 12:15-20 (NIV):

***Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.***

## Closing Prayer (10 minutes or so)

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Then say: Before we join in the closing prayer, let us pause to acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit, who is as close as our very breath.

*Pause for 30 seconds*

Let's pray.

## The Prayer of Oscar Romero

- Reader 1: It helps, now and then, to step back and take the long view.  
The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,  
It is even beyond our vision.
- Reader 2: We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise  
that is God's work.  
Nothing we do is complete,  
Which is another way of saying that  
The Kingdom always lies beyond us.
- Reader 3: No statement says all that should be said.  
No prayer fully expressed our faith.  
No confession brings perfection.  
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.  
No program accomplishes the church's mission.  
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.
- Reader 4: This is what we are about.  
We plant the seeds that one day will grow.  
We water seeds already planted,  
Knowing that they hold future promise.
- Reader 5: We lay foundations that will need further development.  
We provide yeast that produced effects far beyond our capabilities.  
We cannot do everything,  
And there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.
- Reader 6: This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.  
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning,  
A step along the way,  
An opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.
- Reader 7: We may never see the end results,  
But that is the difference  
Between the master builder and the worker.  
We are workers, not master builders,  
Ministers, not messiahs.  
We are prophets of a future that is not our own.

- Fr. Ken Untener [<https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/morning-and-new-beginnings-prayers>]



If you have time you can listen to the Taizé song, “My Peace I Leave You” (or part of it), following this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cY22uNjIXj8> (7’50”).

Then, in these words, invite any participants who have a prayer, a concern, or a request to briefly share it:

**We are disciples on a journey.**

**We are the body of Christ, broken for the world.**

**We hold one another as we carry the concerns of our neighbors.**

**If you feel moved, please share your prayer aloud.**

Leader: We pray also for the members of the JustFaith community across the country. Unite us through the power of your Holy Spirit, that together we might participate with you in the building of your Kingdom, in order to create a more just and peaceful world. Amen.