



Light and Darkness November 9, 2020

Dear Member of the JustFaith Network,

We are grateful that you are a part of our JustFaith community. Whether you are a graduate of one of our programs or you are just getting to know us, we hope this resource will help sustain you spiritually and equip you to work for justice.

Our weekly resources will appear in your inbox once a week, and you can access an archive of past resources by logging onto your JustFaith account. You can use these resources for personal reflection, or you can invite your friends, family, Sunday School class, or current or past JFM small group to join you in-person or via videoconferencing.

In the meantime, we're offering tips and tools for facilitating all of our current programs virtually. While we hope that this weekly resource will spiritually sustain your community while distancing, [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!

A note about this specific resource: We inevitably have to write our weekly resources a week before we release them. As I (Kristin) write to you on November 2, I sense the anxiety coming from across the political spectrum, as people wave giant flags in the back of pick-up trucks barreling down my street, and as protesters still march for racial justice here in Louisville. For this reason, I've chosen an excerpt from [EngagingSpirituality](#), a newly-updated program written to help folks reconnect with the Holy One as they discern how they are called to sow love and seek justice in their unique contexts. I hope that it will inspire you to hold up your finger to the wind as you reorient yourself to how exactly you might be called to seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God in this particular moment in our lives and in our nation's history.

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

In solidarity,

The JustFaith Ministries Staff



Welcome and Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

When everyone has dialed in, [share your screen](#)¹ and ask two readers to help you with the opening prayer. 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's resource is drawn from a JustFaith Ministries' program called [Engaging Spirituality](#). I hope that it will help us to discern how exactly we might be called to use our unique gifts, talents, and resources in this moment in our lives and in our nation's history. 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.

Invocation

Facilitator: Healing Love,

Reader 1: Encourage Us.

Facilitator: Compassionate Spirit,

Reader 1: Disturb Us.

Facilitator: Abiding Presence,

Reader 1: Breathe new life into us.

Facilitator: Let us pause for silence.

Pause for 1 minute.

Centering Meditation

¹ A screen-sharing tutorial is available at:

<https://youtu.be/a1O8zVwrlu8?list=PL0UqnFehqr9J-yqmdAgVHQiMkdr4aRFnk>



Facilitator: In the beginning all was darkness
Reader 2: emptiness
Reader 3: aloneness
Facilitator: and the holy breath of the living God hovered over the void

Pause

Facilitator: The voice of God shattered the void.
Reader 1: and from its nothingness came light to punctuate the darkness,
Reader 2: making it holy.

Pause

Facilitator: Evening came BEFORE morning...
Reader 1: “The bright blessed day”
Reader 2: “and the dark sacred night.”

Pause

Facilitator: Darkness and light cohere.
Reader 1: They belong together.
Reader 2: They REQUIRE each other.

Longer Pause

Facilitator: “Until we accept the shadow side of ourselves and of the world around us, a mystery that contains destruction as well as creation, we will never be able to appreciate being an integral part of things.

Pause

Reader 1: We will always see ourselves as separate.

Pause

Reader 2: If we want to be part of Nature instead of apart from it, we must make friends with a mystery that is both joyous and horrifying,

Pause

Facilitator: and this will never happen as long as we’re obsessed



with explaining and controlling everything.”

– Gerald May

Invite participants to pause for silent reflection.

Pause for 1 minute.

Scripture Reading (10 minutes)

Ask a volunteer to slowly and prayerfully read [Psalm 130](#). Use whichever translation you prefer.

Then invite participants to pause for silent reflection.

Pause for one minute.

Reflection (20 minutes-ish)

Ask Readers 1 and 2 to read the reflection (continue sharing your screen).

Reader 1: “Out of the depths.
Not from the top of our lungs.
Not out of the need just to do something.
Not out of pure frustration, anger, desire for revenge.
Not out of the superficiality of our restlessness.

Pause

Reader 2: Out of the very depths of our being we cry to God for peace.
Out of that fearful place where we have to confess
that we too are part of the destruction against which we are protesting.

Pause



Reader 1: Out of that center where we discover that we too are so high up in the air that we have become numb and no longer see, feel and hear the agony of thousands who are struck by the seeds of destruction...

Pause

Out of that empty spot of silence where we feel helpless, embarrassed, and powerless, where we suffer from our own impotence to stop the reign of death in our world.

Pause

Facilitator: Out of those depths we cry to the Lord and say: ‘Lord have mercy.’”

– Henri Nouwen

Slowly present these prompts for reflection:

- **What place in you is most in need of peace at this time?**
- **What words of peace would you offer yourself?**

Pause then repeat the prompts. Nominate someone, inviting him or her to share what is in her/his heart. After that person has shared, s/he nominates another person in the circle. (If the invitee is neither ready, nor inclined to share, s/he can decline and nominate another person.) This process continues until everyone has had the opportunity to share.

Conclude the conversation by re-reading [Psalm 130:5-6](#).

Announcements (10 minutes-ish)

- Remind participants that today’s reflection was drawn from JustFaith Ministries’ small group program called EngagingSpirituality. EngagingSpirituality is easy to facilitate: you don’t have to be a clergy person or have prior experience facilitating groups. It takes place in eight-week segments: you can choose to end after the first eight weeks, or you can continue on to the second and third program. To learn more about this program, visit JustFaith Ministries’ website: <https://justfaith.org/out-of-the-light-creating-sacred-space-for-self-and-others/>



- Let participants know that the materials for this gathering were free, put together by the JustFaith Ministries staff in order to equip more people for the work of peace and justice. In order to support the creation of more resources and programs, participants are encouraged to donate to JustFaith Ministries through justfaith.org.
- JustFaith Ministries is currently hosting a monthly webinar series called “Acting for Justice While Sheltering in Place,” in which an expert on a justice-related topic will offer tips for taking action during COVID-19. Visit the [JustFaith Ministries Facebook page](#) for more information on times and topics.
- Are there any opportunities for action or advocacy happening in your community this week? Invite participants to share ways to support the work of local groups working for justice.

Closing Prayer (10 minutes-ish)

Invite the group into silence:

Pause for 30 seconds.

Close with this reflection:

What are you waiting for? Who are you waiting with? What are you expecting?

[Read Romans 8:22-27](#)

Call to mind someone in your life who is in darkness or anguish.

Pause

Visualize the face of an enemy, a person you have maligned, someone who has hurt you.

Pause

Consider a current reality, a place of suffering and despair.

Psalm for the Vigilant

Invite everyone to close their eyes and extend their hands (palms upturned) as if to receive.

Ask everyone to respond to each phrase with this refrain: ***In hope we are saved.***

(Slowly and prayerfully, alternating voices and pausing between lines.)



<i>With our desecrated planet in peril...</i>	<i>In hope we are saved.</i>
<i>With our people exposed to the ravages of nature...</i>	<i>In hope we are saved.</i>
<i>With families tortured by addictions...</i>	<i>In hope we are saved.</i>
<i>With our neighbors terrorized by violence and war...</i>	<i>In hope we are saved.</i>
<i>With our people weakened by hunger...</i>	<i>In hope we are saved.</i>
<i>With our incarcerated neighbors and their families...</i>	<i>In hope we are saved.</i>
<i>With victims and perpetrators of crime...</i>	<i>In hope we are saved.</i>
<i>With our abandoned street children...</i>	<i>In hope we are saved.</i>
<i>With the trafficked and tortured members of our family...</i>	<i>In hope we are saved.</i>
<i>With loved ones ravaged by physical and mental illness...</i>	<i>In hope we are saved.</i>
<i>With aged parents and grandparents in their frailty...</i>	<i>In hope we are saved.</i>
<i>With families and nations torn apart by differences...</i>	<i>In hope we are saved.</i>
<i>With sisters and brothers scarred by abuse...</i>	<i>In hope we are saved.</i>
<i>With those forced to leave their homelands and families...</i>	<i>In hope we are saved.</i>
<i>With the sea of anonymous impoverished humanity...</i>	<i>In hope we are saved.</i>
<i>With all those whose cries fail to reach our ears...</i>	<i>In hope we are saved.</i>

Over the course of the next week, spend some time in silent vigil. Either in the dark of night or early morning, light a candle and spend some time, waiting in silence, listening to the world, holding up those who are holding out for peace.

Close with this reflection:

*“In the collapse of worlds of meaning and value,
in the insecurity and uncertainty that riddles personal and communal life,
there is room to make a way.*

Pause

*But we are to make a way in a world sorely disheartened by the disorientation
brought on by the great disparity between events and our expectations
of what might have been.*

Pause

*Like Mary and the Beloved Disciple at the foot of the Cross,
we are swathed in the consoling hope
that in giving ourselves to this mystery, God comes.” Michael Downey*

Ask everyone to stand, link hands, and bow their heads. Offer this prayer:

<i>Lamb of God you take away the sin of the world...</i>	<i>Have mercy on us.</i>
<i>Lamb of God you take away the sin of the world...</i>	<i>Have mercy on us.</i>
<i>Lamb of God you take away the sin of the world...</i>	<i>Grant us peace.</i>



Encourage people to hold this prayer in their hearts as they keep vigil.

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.