

International Solidarity Days – March 2020



March 8—International Women's Day

International Women's Day (IWD) was first recognized by the United Nations in 1975. The Theme for IWD 2020 is #EachforEqual—an equal world is an enabled world. The theme aims at not only calling attention to inequalities faced by women every day, but urges each woman to stand for equality everywhere—in the Church, in the workplace, in society, in the halls of government, in the family etc. There can be no justice without equality. "We can actively choose to challenge stereotypes, fight bias, broaden perceptions, improve situations and celebrate women's achievements. Collectively, each one of us can help create a gender equal world."

For more information go to:

<https://internationalwomensday.com/2020Theme>

Oh, Holy One, as we celebrate the many ways in which women and girls contribute to creating a better world, we also acknowledge that much remains to be done to achieve true equality in all aspects of life and society. We ask your blessing as we stand together to call for and to work towards a gender equal world where every person can live up to her/his full potential.

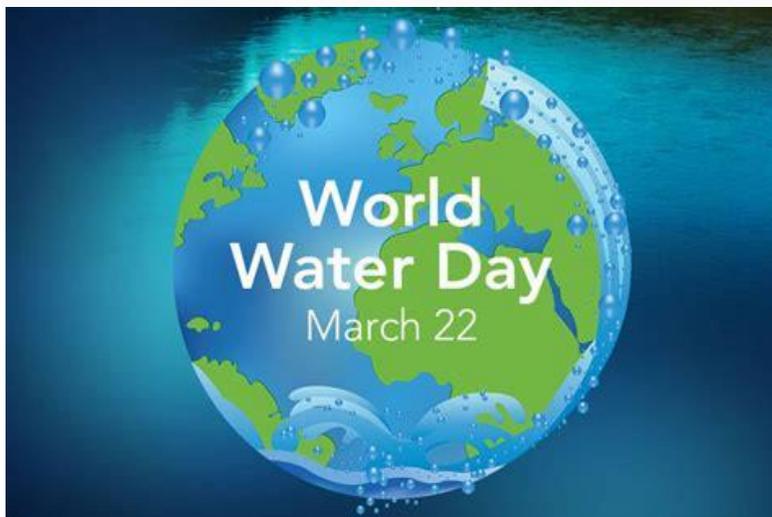
March 21—Week of Solidarity Against Racism and Racial Discrimination

March 21st begins the UN week of solidarity against racism and racial discrimination. This date was chosen to remember the 69-people killed by police on March 21, 1960, at a peaceful demonstration against the apartheid "pass laws" in Sharpeville, South Africa. Racial and ethnic discrimination remains a major problem in many parts of the world. The flames of racial suspicion and distrust have often been fanned into conflagrations that have led to the deaths and outright genocide of countless communities the world over throughout history. It is long past time to begin to confront racism and ethnic discrimination wherever it is found. In this global world where all of us live, we must learn to depend on one another, trust one another and dialogue in order to understand each other. We must learn to live together in harmony, or we will all perish together, because all of us are interconnected. Let this week of solidarity continue throughout the year and grow with each passing day!



O God, we ask your blessing as we examine our own lives and discover what racial discrimination lives within our own hearts. Help us to recognize it and to take steps to root it out. Soften our hearts towards one another and grant us empathy, so that we become willing to reach out and share our stories with each other, in order to build understanding and compassion.

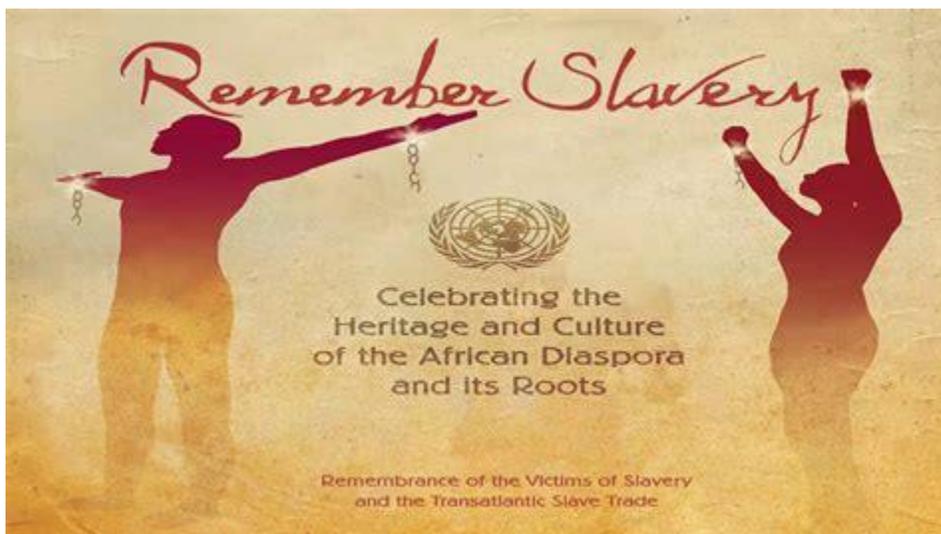
March 22—World Water Day



This Day was established in 1993 by the UN to raise awareness among all people about the need to protect and conserve the precious gift of water. World Water Day 2020 seeks to draw attention to the connection between water and climate change. Availability of fresh and clean drinking water requires that we take serious action to limit and stop progressive climate change. Rising sea levels is already pushing sea water inland, resulting in saltwater contamination of fresh, drinkable water sources. More efficient use of water, and reduction of greenhouse gasses are essential to our long-term survival. Learn—Share—Act. To read more about each of these go to: <https://www.worldwaterday.org/>

God, we thank you for the precious gift of Sister Water. As we learn more about what we can each do to conserve water and to keep it safe from contamination, motivate us to action for the common good. We know that water is essential to life on this planet. Help us to treat water with respect and to use it wisely.

March 25—International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade



This UN day of remembrance has been held annually since 2008. Over 17 million Africans were transported to the Americas during 16th to the mid-19th centuries, with many millions more dying in route. This day is a special day for remembering—remembering all those who were sold into slavery as well as those who died during the treacherous Atlantic crossing. Only the strongest survived. Over the years, suffering, deprivation and family separation continued. Despite of all this, those who lived helped to build up whole societies.

Their creativity and determination to be free kept hope alive, even when all seemed lost. After “freedom” came, discrimination and oppression continued. Indeed, these are legacies of the slave trade that still affect many individuals and societies today. This day is for honouring those who suffered, for remembering those who lived and those who died, and for addressing societal disparities that continue to affect all of us. In the UN resolution 62/122 which created this day of remembrance, the resolution also called for the establishment of an outreach program to mobilize educational institutions, civil society and other organizations to inculcate in future generations the "causes, consequences and lessons of the transatlantic slave trade, and to communicate the dangers of racism and prejudice."

God, we ask forgiveness for the suffering caused to so many people by the transatlantic slave trade. Heal us all of the racism that continues to divide us from one another. Help us to respect, honor and support one another as brothers and sisters, created to bring justice and love to our world. Help us to work for an end to all policies that seek to disenfranchise people from full participation in society based on race and /or ethnicity.