**Prayers for black History Month**

 **Xavier University**

I Dream a World

I dream a world where man
No other man will scorn,
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its paths adorn
I dream a world where all
Will know sweet freedom’s way,
Where greed no longer saps the soul
Nor avarice blights our day.
A world I dream where black or white,
Whatever race you be,
Will share the bounties of the earth
And every man is free,
Where wretchedness will hang its head
And joy, like a pearl,
Attends the needs of all mankind-
Of such I dream, my world!

Poem by Langston Hughes

Prayer for Black History Month

Spirit of Abundance, God of Grace, Mother of Hope,
We pause now to remember those stories that are all around us,
But so often passed over,
Those stories that when told are shared because
Of what someone is, not who they are.
This month in our nation’s character
Is Black History month.
Help us to realize that Black history is
All our histories.
May the day come when these stories
Are so wildly taught that no month need
Be separately divided.
We know this day will not come until we as a people
Make different choices.
We pray now for those new choices.
May we come to see a day where the prison system
Becomes redemptive, not punitive.
A day where the legal system learns to focus more squarely on the facts,
And the not colors of our skin.
A day where our schools are as well funded, as the needs demand.
May our role models be allowed to excel when they thrive,
And not be taken down for their rich heritage.
We know this will require a shift in power.
And this can be scary for some.
Give those full of fear – hope.
May we come to know grace,
So that our hearts will not be hardened to the pain around us.
There are so many beautiful stories needing to be told.
And we need to get the chance to hear them.
Widen our vision so that the history that is shared this month,
And every month,
Come to be known as our history too.
We are most human when we see the humanity in others.
           Author unknown

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Lord, Lord, Open Unto Me

Open unto me, light for my darkness
Open unto me, courage for my fear
Open unto me, hope for my despair
Open unto me, peace for my turmoil
Open unto me, joy for my sorrow
Open unto me, strength for my weakness
Open unto me, wisdom for my confusion
Open unto me, forgiveness for my sins
Open unto me, tenderness for my toughness
Open unto me, love for my hates
Open unto me, Thy Self for myself
Lord, Lord, open unto me!

*Written by Howard Thurman, From Meditations of the Heart
Thurman who was born in 1899 and raised in the segregated South. He is recognized as one of the great spiritual leaders of the 20th century renowned for his reflections on humanity and our relationship with God. Thurman was a prolific author (writing at least 20 books); perhaps the most famous is Jesus and the Disinherited (1949), which deeply influenced Martin Luther King, Jr. and other leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. Thurman was the first black person to be a tenured Dean at a PWI (Boston U). He also cofounded the first interracially pastored, intercultural**church in the US.*

A Prayer for Mercy

Spirit of the Living GOD,

We have gathered in this place this morning, allow your spirit to fill our very being. Most gracious and loving GOD, we remember the struggles of our people, black people, people of African descent, your people and thank you for your grace, your love, and your mercy. We thank you for leaders that you continue to place in high places and ordinary places. Inspire each of us to work more faithfully for justice and dignity of life everywhere. Lord GOD, we remember the hurts of exclusion and prejudice, but we know that you can raise our vision above all barriers and give us wisdom and courage to make this a better world.

As you give us yourself in the Bread of Hope and the Cup of Mercy - show us how to give ourselves to those who are without hope and to those who cry for mercy.

Lord GOD, rule over our spirit in this hour that we will go from this worship with the freedom of those who trust in you.

In the name of Jesus Christ, AMEN.

Invocation by*My Moms Prayers*

A Prayer of Empowerment

Most Loving and Merciful GOD,

In whose law we find our guidance, in whose Love we find our healing and joy, and in whose will we find our peace, rule over our spirits in this hour that we will go from this worship with the freedom of those who trust you and need have no anxiety for themselves. Empower us, O GOD to be open to the seasons of life and give of our hearts Love generously to all in need. Grant us the silence of heart so that we can grow in your word.

As we go through this worship today and culminate what we call **"Black History Month"**, help us to never forget our history and en still in us the willingness to share our history with our youth and others throughout the year.

Now Lord GOD, fill us with the solemnity of the faith of the great commission; but also provide us with the means and the will to stay in Loving and Joyous relationships with one another and the world. We ask a special blessing for our pastor who will bring the message by sharing historical reflections.

Lord, we praise and adore you and we thank you for the joy we have in worshiping you in spirit and in truth.

In the name of JESUS, the Christ, we pray, AMEN.

Invocation by *My Moms Prayers*