



GATHER AND PRAY the Lord's Prayer.

Lift up in prayer especially people in our country who have been most affected by the virus crisis: the sick and those recovering, those who have lost loved ones, health workers, those who must work, the unemployed.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION —Isaiah 58:6-9

⁶ Is this not, rather, the fast that I choose:

releasing those bound unjustly,
untying the thongs of the yoke;

Setting free the oppressed,
breaking off every yoke?

⁷ Is it not sharing your bread with the hungry,
bringing the afflicted and the homeless into your house;

Clothing the naked when you see them,
and not turning your back on your own flesh?

⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your wound shall quickly be healed;

Your vindication shall go before you,
and the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

⁹ Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer,
you shall cry for help, and he will say: "Here I am!"

- Isaiah 58:6-9 is often read on Ash Wednesday as we reflect on the kind of prayer and fasting that God responds to. What does it have to say to our response to our fellow Americans in this time of crisis?
- What are the challenges of responding to others' needs in this way when we ourselves may be dealing with a lot?

SOCIAL INQUIRY

Covid-19 has affected different communities of American differently. African Americans are 3.57 times more likely to die of the virus than white Americans of the same age. Hispanic Americans are also disproportionately affected. Lower income Americans are more likely to be severely ill

from the virus than higher income people. There are many factors contributing to these differences. Different access to testing and high-quality healthcare is one of many factors. Another factor is that low-income people and people of color are less likely to have jobs that can be done from home. Also, low-income people are more likely to live in crowded homes where isolating a sick person is impossible.

“COVID-19 is killing black Americans with horrifying precision. Black Americans get the disease at a higher rate than white people do. Retirement homes with black residents become outbreak [clusters](#). Black people die of COVID-19 at a higher rate than white people do—and that rate is even higher than it may seem, according to a [study](#) released last week by Yale University’s Cary P. Gross and co-authors. When you account for age—black people are on average younger than white people, and should therefore be expected to die at a lower rate, not a higher one—black mortality is 3.57 times white mortality.”

—Graeme Wood, “What’s Behind the COVID-19 Racial Disparity?” *The Atlantic*. May 27, 2020. <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/05/we-dont-know-whats-behind-covid-19-racial-disparity/612106/>

OBSERVE

1. Do some research about the factors that have contributed to the higher illness and death rate among low-income people and people of color.
2. Investigate which groups of Americans have suffered the most from unemployment during the virus pandemic. Why are those groups more likely to be unemployed?
3. Investigate how urban and rural areas have been affected differently by the pandemic and the economic shutdown.

JUDGE

1. How do you think these differences have affected the way people you know have responded to the health crisis and the economic impact?
2. How do you think the people of God should respond to the differences this pandemic has highlighted?
3. Even if we have not lost loved ones or our jobs this year, most of us have a great deal on our plates just sorting out how our children will manage school, how we will manage work, and how our families can stay healthy. What would you say to someone who says, “Look, I just don’t have bandwidth right now to get involved with helping other people get back on their feet”?

ACT

1. Do an act of kindness for someone who has suffered economically as a result of the Covid-19 crisis.

2. Advocate for what you believe to be a just healthcare system. (What if members of your CFM group don't agree on what a just system would look like?)



See more Meeting Plans and Directions for Holding a CFM meeting, visit [http://www.cfm.org/supplemental materials](http://www.cfm.org/supplemental_materials)

For more CFM Meeting Plans, become a member of the Christian Family Movement. <https://www.cfm.org/join-and-renew-form>