

(Invocation delivered by the Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., President of the University of Notre Dame, at the dinner of the Civil Rights State Advisory Committees, Washington, D.C., June 27, 1964)

Lord God, Father of all our people, grant us, we pray, the special virtues we need in this hour of decision. Grant us, first of all, a deep and heartfelt reverence for the innate dignity of every human being made in Your image and likeness.

Grant us compassion for all who suffer injustice, indignity, and persecution.

Grant us a passion for justice that all our people may enjoy equality to live and grow as human dignity requires.

In an age when all too little really care, grant us a sense of dedication and commitment, realizing that whatsoever we do for one of these, Your least brethren, we are doing for You, and serving You.

Grant us courage, for wisdom without courage is sterile, and nothing will be done in our day without meeting the basic requirement of courage: that we not only believe in human dignity, but are willing to stand up, to work, yes, even to suffer to achieve it.

Armed with reverence for Your image in all our brethren, compassion for those who suffer, a burning passion for justice, a sense of dedication and courage to act -- grant that we can move forward to achieve in our times the great dream that brought our country into being.

We thank You this day for the great blessings of America, we confess our considerable faults, prejudices, and inequities, and we do pray for Your grace today to rededicate ourselves to do Your will which is our justice, our love, and our peace.