

## **Saturday after the First Sunday in Lent, March 4, 2023**

Recommended readings: p. 92, "1773," pp. 93-94, "proof [dear Phillis], and pp. 112-122, "Fear" (excerpt)

Leslie Alexander and Michelle Alexander describe the brutality of police officers and private citizens after the abolition of slavery. "Throughout the South, local police forces were often made up of former slave patrollers and members of the Ku Klux Klan, and they adopted many of the same strategies that patrollers had employed, using the excuse of nightly curfews and vagrancy laws to control, harass, detain, and punish Black citizens for daring to behave as though they were free. The Klan, operating extralegally, openly murdered Black people who violated the written and unwritten rules of white supremacy. Often the precise causes and triggers of white fear and rage were mixed or unclear, but the consequences were always devastating. Between 1877 and 1950, more than four thousand Black men, women, and children lost their lives to lynching. Fleeing violence, harsh segregation laws, and exploitative economic conditions, many Black Americans headed north, in what would become known as the Great Migration, to take advantage of the need for industrial workers that arose during the First World War and to achieve some modicum of safety. Unfortunately, many soon realized that white mob violence reigned there as well. One of the bloodiest race massacres in the twentieth century occurred in East St. Louis, Illinois, in 1917. That tragedy involved a spree of lynchings, mayhem, and brutal burnings of people and buildings that left an official death toll of at least thirty-nine Black and eight white Americans, though historians estimate that more than a hundred Black people were actually killed."

*After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. (Revelation 7:9)*

Can you identify the segregated communities in your city? Do you feel comfortable driving through them? Have you ever or do you know someone who has been afraid of being stopped by the police because of the color of their skin? Look up "sundown town" on Wikipedia ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sundown\\_town](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sundown_town)). Do some research to see if there were written or unwritten curfews used to create segregated communities in your town.

### **Prayer**

God of all, remind us that everything that exists is created from your hand out of love. Teach us to respect what you love. Teach us to love what you have created. Make us mindful of the times we look at someone as "other." Help us to be aware of the times when we notice differences rather than the common dignity of being created in your image and likeness. Help us to be honest with ourselves when we are fearful of those who seem different than us. Help us to be bridges of unity and builders of communities of love. Amen.