



Juneteenth

**It took 89 years past our country's Independence Day before all** enslaved African-Americans were free. June 19, 1865, also known as *National Freedom Day*, is considered the official end of slavery in the United States. Enslaved peoples in Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas were not told about their freedom until this day, even though other Southern states had known since April 1863. Texans started the first family and community celebrations to honor their freedom on June 19th, 1866. The day of activities was known as Jubilee Day! The day was started with the reading of the Emancipation Proclamation. Jubilee day eventually became known as JUNETEENTH, shorthand for the month and day that enslaved Texans were notified of their freedom in 1865. The holiday is still observed in African-American communities throughout the country with prayers, family gatherings, rallies, concerts, galas, book readings, and awareness fairs! Today Juneteenth is recognized as a federal holiday. President Joe Biden signed legislation in 2021 making it so! We invite everyone in the Bon Secours family to pray, learn, and get involved in Juneteenth celebrations this year!

*Here are some ways to celebrate:*

## 1. For your meditation and reflection...

We invite you to take some time in reflection on this important holiday. Either on your own or with a group of friends or family read this poem and then explore the questions and what they mean for you today.



## ***A Commemoration***

Today, we commemorate the end of slavery in America. This day partially reminds us of the progress made. This day also partially reminds us of the progress we have not made.

We celebrate the freedom of black lives in our nation. We grieve that we have not correctly reconciled racism in our nation. You created each person in Your image.

The two greatest commandments call us to love You with all our heart, souls, and minds; Then, to love our neighbor as ourselves. Your love for us motivates us to love each other. If we do not love each other, then ultimately, we have not experienced Your love.

As much as we commemorate and celebrate Juneteenth, we grieve this day. We mourn that our black brothers and sisters have not been loved as our neighbors. We mourn that our black brothers and sisters have been treated less than created in Your image throughout history. So, Lord, we confess our sins and repent. The healing and reconciliation we desire comes from the gospel.

On Juneteenth this year, we ask You to guide our nation. May the good news of the gospel motivate us to love each other. May the ideals of our words match the practices of our lives. May a fresh empowerment of Your Spirit unite us together. Give us eyes to see and ears to hear Your will and leading.

- Peter Englert  
(Source: [www.xavier.edu](http://www.xavier.edu))

### **Personal and/or Group Reflection:**

\*\*\* What words or themes struck you...resonated with/for you?

\*\*\* As you read this reflection, what, if anything, grieves you?

\*\*\* How is the Holy Spirit leading you in the work of social justice?

\*\*\* What will you do to commemorate Juneteenth this year?

Some ideas:

- *Support of Social Justice Organizations/Initiatives, i.e. NAACP, National Urban League, NETWORK (Advocates For Justice, Inspired By Catholic Sisters)*

- *Support A Local HBCU*

- *Develop a Reading List for the Summer (Books/Articles Regarding the History of Race in this Nation, Critical Race Theory, Black Wall Street /The Tulsa Race Massacre, etc.)*

- *Have Lunch/Planned Fellowship with Someone of Different Race/Ethnicity*

- *For those in the DMV (DC, Md., Va.), plan a visit to the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History*

- *For those in South Carolina, plan a visit to the new International African American Museum in Charleston, SC (Opening Day - June 27, 2023...)*



## 2. Learn more about Juneteenth

Here are two videos where you can learn more:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lq8TNKZVEWs>
- <https://www.magnetmediafilms.com/story/19-ways-to-celebrate-juneteenth>

Here are some resources to learn more about Juneteenth:

1. [National Museum of African American History and Culture's online Juneteenth exhibit](#)
2. [The Juneteenth Podcast](#) from The New York Times' "The Daily"
3. [The History Channel's page on Juneteenth](#)
4. [The New York Times' article on the history of Juneteenth](#)
5. [PBS' documentary "Juneteenth Jamboree"](#)
6. [The book "On Juneteenth" by Annette Gordon-Reed](#)
7. [The children's book "The Juneteenth Story" by Alliah L. Agostini](#)
8. [The Juneteenth Legacy Project](#)



# 3. Attend a local Juneteenth event in your area

You can celebrate Juneteenth wherever you are! Check out this list or get out and about next Monday and find something in your neighborhood. Juneteenth really is a day for community. Enjoy!

## Local Celebrations

### Florida:

17th- Juneteenth - Freedom Fest, Warehouse Arts District, St. Petersburg, FL

18th - Afro CAN Fest, 5-9pm Perry Harvey Sr. Park, Tampa FL

### Kentucky:

16-17th - Heart of Kentucky Juneteenth Celebration

[www.juneteenthky.com](http://www.juneteenthky.com) ; [www.louisvillejuneteenthfest.com](http://www.louisvillejuneteenthfest.com)

### Maryland:

10th - Juneteenth Festival, 5-8 pm, Hyattsville, MD

15th - Juneteenth: Honoring Food, Traditions and Histories, The Walters Museum, Baltimore MD

19th- Juneteenth Breakfast, We've Come This Far by Faith, The Pavilion at Vaughn Greene Funeral Service, Randallstown MD

### Ohio:

17th - Juneteenth Panel Discussion and Tasting Event, Cincinnati, Ohio

18th - Juneteenth Tasting Event, 10am-4pm, Findlay Market, Cincinnati, Ohio

## **South Carolina:**

### **Charleston:**

12th - Low Country Juneteenth Week, starts at 7pm on the 12th through 11:30pm on the 19th

17th - Juneteenth Family Fest Charleston, Riverfront Park North Charleston

### **Greenville:**

16th - Juneteenth Gala- A Celebration of Freedom, 6-12midnight, Greenville Convention Center

19th - Juneteenth Independence Day, Kroc Center, Greenville

### **Virginia/Washington DC:**

17th - Juneteenth Celebration, Patriot Park, 11am-4pm, Fredericksburg, VA

17th - Juneteenth Community Day 8-10 am, Kenilworth Park, Washington DC

19th - Juneteenth Freedom Festival, 12-1pm, Newport News VA

19th - African American Museum, Washington, DC