



## A message from **THE PRESIDENT**

### **2023 JUNETEENTH**

*"The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired laborer."*

– Union Army General Gordon Granger, June 19, 1865

*"We envision a land  
That is liberated, not lawless..."*

– Amanda Gorman, 2017 National Youth Poet Laureate

General Granger's remarks proclaimed the abolition of slavery in the State of Texas. In the years that followed, the local celebration of Juneteenth became a nation-wide observation of Emancipation. And, as of 2021, June 19 is now an official Federal holiday: Juneteenth.

Juneteenth joyfully celebrates the remarkable resilience of Black America and its cultural, historical, and social contributions to the life of the country. It is also a potent reminder that much remains to be done before this nation truly provides "an absolute equality of rights" for all of its citizens.

Given the increasingly polarized political scene, it is more important than ever that we denounce racism and oppression wherever they raise their ugly heads. We must work to make the dream of liberty and justice a reality not just for a few – but for all.

Amanda Gorman is a young poet who caught the nation's imagination when she read her work at President Biden's 2021 inauguration. Her poem "Fury and Faith" is a contribution to the celebration of Juneteenth. It is a powerful hymn to the indomitable spirit and power of Black America, past and present.

## *Fury And Faith*

*You will be told that this is not a problem,  
Not your problem.  
You will be told that now is not the time for change to begin;  
Told that we cannot win.  
But the point of protest isn't winning —  
It's holding fast to the promise of freedom,  
Even when fast victory is not promised,  
Meaning we cannot stand up to police  
If we cannot cease policing our own imagination,  
Convincing our communities that this won't work  
Before the work has even begun,  
That this can wait,  
When we've already waited out a thousand suns.  
By now, we understand white supremacy  
and the despair it demands  
Are as destructive as any disease.  
So when you're told that your rage is reactionary,  
Remember that rage is our right.  
It teaches us it is time to fight  
in the face of injustice.  
Not only is anger natural but necessary  
Because it helps carry us to our destination.  
Our goal has never been revenge, just restoration;  
not dominance, just dignity;  
not fear, just freedom;  
just justice.  
Whether we prevail is determined  
not by all the challenges that are present  
But by all the change that is possible.  
And though we be unstoppable,  
If we ever feel like we might fail,  
If we be fatigued and frail  
When our fire can no longer be fueled by fury,  
We will be fortified by this faith  
Found in the vow, the anthem:  
All black lives matter, no matter what!  
Black lives are worth living,  
Worth defending,  
Worth every struggle.  
We must stand up for all of us and our aims,  
United through protest and pain,  
Amplifying women, the LGBTQ community,  
and people with disabilities.  
Because none of us are free*

*Until all of us break our chains.  
We owe it to the fallen to fight,  
But we owe it to ourselves  
To never stay kneeling  
When the day calls us to stand together.  
We envision a land  
That is liberated, not lawless;  
We create a future  
That is free, not flawless.  
Over and over, again and again,  
We will stride up every mountain side,  
Magnanimous and modest.  
We will be protected and served  
By a force that is honored and honest.  
This is more than protest —  
It's a promise!*

With these inspirational words ringing in our ears, I hope you will join me in celebrating this very special day.

*Mil gracias y bendiciones,*

Daisy Cocco De Filippis, Ph.D.  
President

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