“To be black was to be the beneficiary of a great inheritance, a special destiny, glorious burdens that only we were strong enough to bear.”
— Barack Obama, Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance

Literature has often spoken of dreams. Martin Luther King, Jr. eloquently shared his dream in his famous speech at the Lincoln Memorial in 1963; Langston Hughes in his poem, “A Dream Deferred” asks what happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up or does it explode? Perhaps the young woman depicted in the photo above, dreams of an education in a system free of racial slurs and taunts where she does not have to fear for her life.

Most of us will never have to face the humiliating situations and staggering injustices borne by our sisters and brothers of color. And let us not think that this is a thing of the past. Racism today often expresses itself in more subtle ways that are just as insidious.

As the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas we share many dreams about our future together. One such dream is our desire to address “the unrecognized and unreconciled racism” present in our own systems and structures. If we are serious about this challenge then we must work to make this dream a reality. We are called to examine our own prejudices and discriminatory actions but our task is much deeper. We must look seriously at our own institutional racism and acknowledge our own complicity both individually and communally in oppressive systems and structures.

The dream cannot be deferred any longer. The injustice cannot continue. Holding each other in compassion and prayer we move forward on our journey together.

**Reflection**

Why do I think this injustice is happening?

What is one thing I might do to help change this situation?

How does my daily prayer and living put me in contact with this Critical Concern?