

***Reflections for the 50th Anniversary Mass in Honor of the Selma to
Montgomery March***

The City of St Jude...The Final Campsite

Archbishop Rodi, Archbishop Kurtz, Archbishop Gregory, Bishop Steib, Bishop Perry, Bishop Holley, my brother priests, deacons, religious men and women, Most Worthy Supreme Knight Blackmon, Mrs. Donna Grimes, public servants, elected officials and my sisters and brothers in Christ one and all..

At some point 50 years ago in the midst of that arduous and dangerous journey from Selma to Montgomery the marchers must have sung:

We're marching, marching, marching to beautiful Zion

We're marching onward to Zion, the beautiful City of God.

We have come fifty years later to this holy place, at the center of these hallowed grounds where for almost eight decades God's people have been educated, nursed, taught, consoled, fed and clothed, had the Good News preached to them and celebrated all the sacraments. In this place and in her sister institutions, the Edmundite Southern Missions in Selma and

Resurrection Catholic Missions here in Montgomery a legion of Catholic clergy, religious and laity with the prayerful and temporal support of hundreds of thousands of believers across this country have been agents of justice and mercy commanded of those who are followers of Jesus.

The fabric of this city, state, region and indeed our country was changed for the better by the witness and the involvement of these Catholic Christian disciples and other believers who gave their lives in service and some of whom even shed their blood to advance civil and other human rights.

I stand before you this evening as a grateful representative and recipient of the labor and loving sacrifices made by so many. I thank Almighty God for these men and women of faith, those still among us and those who have gone to be with the ancestors in the Church triumphant.

In this day it is our renewed charge to continue to pray and work to make sure that justice, voting, civil and other human rights are expanded and to nullify with action, prayer, compassion, resources and the dent of our collective wills all efforts to undo the progress we have made in these fifty years.

From issues of life and capital punishment, income inequality, mass incarceration of Black youth and men, voter suppression, violence, inhumane policing to the destruction of God's good earth, you and I are obliged by our

baptisms, by the Gospels, by the social and moral teaching of our Church and by the legacy of those who marched before us to continue the struggle for justice and peace. No matter how arduous the journey, it is our belief that our steps will remain ordered, that when weary we will be strengthened, when dry refreshed, that our feet will not be allowed to stumble, that we will be carried when faint by the Lord Jesus. For the way of salvation, the way of justice and peace is His way and on this march to Zion He is our companion and our destination.