

Homily for the Opening Liturgy of the Black Catholic Congress VII
July 9, 1992
New Orleans, Louisiana

**Bishop Joseph A. Francis, SVD Auxillary Bishop,
Archdiocese of Newark**

ABOUT TWENTY NINE YEARS AGO MY TRAVELING COMPANION FROM NOTRE DAME TO CHICAGO WAS A PRIEST WHOM I HOLD IN HIGH ESTEEM, NAMELY MONSIGNOR JACK EAGAN. IN OUR CONVERSATION, AS ALWAYS, JACK WAS DIRECT AND TO THE POINT. HE ASKED ME: "JOE, WHEN WILL THE BLACK CATHOLICS OF THIS COUNTRY PRODUCE AN AGENDA FOR THEMSELVES AND FOR THE CHURCH IN THIS COUNTRY?" I WAS QUICK TO EXPLAIN THAT WE HAD JUST BEGUN TO MAKE ENOUGH NOISE TO BE HEARD. WE WERE INVOLVED IN GETTING THE ATTENTION OF THE HIERARCHY IN THIS COUNTRY AND EVENTUALLY OF ROME. WE HAD THE BLACK CATHOLIC CLERGY CAUCUS, THE BLACK CATHOLIC SISTERS' CONFERENCE AND THE NATIONAL OFFICE FOR BLACK CATHOLICS. WE WERE STRIVING TO GET OUR ACT TOGETHER BY RECRUITING CLERICAL, RELIGIOUS AND LAY PERSONS WHO WERE NOT ONLY INTERESTED IN MAKING CHANGES THAT WOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO BLACK CATHOLICS, BUT FOR THE ENTIRE CHURCH. FIRST, HOWEVER, WE HAD TO MAKE SURE THAT WE AS BLACK CATHOLICS WERE TALKING THE SAME TALK AND WALKING TOGETHER THE SAME WALK AND MAPPING OUT WHERE WE NEEDED TO GO, HOW WE WERE TO TRAVEL AND AT WHAT TIME WE WANTED TO ARRIVE.

SURELY THE LAST TWENTY NINE YEARS TOOK US ON A ROLLER COASTER JOURNEY, SOMETIMES EXCITING, MOST OF THE TIME FRUSTRATING, BUT NONE THE LESS COURAGEOUS. WE WANTED TO HAVE A VOICE IN DETERMINING OUR PLACE IN THE CHURCH. WE PLANNED THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF OUR CONTRIBUTION AND CHALLENGED THE CHURCH TO HEAR US. I AM HAPPY TO SAY THAT I PLAYED SOME SMALL PART IN THE MAKING OF THAT JOURNEY. BUT IN SPITE OF MY DEEP INVOLVEMENT IN TRYING TO PROMOTE JUSTICE, PEACE AND LIBERTY I AM STILL WONDERING IF MY WORDS ARE FALLING ON DEAFENED EARS OR IF THE TINY MUSTARD SEEDS WILL TAKE HOLD AND CHANGE JUST ONE OR TWO RACIST SOULS. I HAVE TRIED AS THOSE BEFORE ME AND WITH ME.. HAVE TRIED. BUT AS I REFLECT I HAVE COME AWAY WITH A SENSE OF SOME FULFILLMENT AND A SENSE OF TREMENDOUS RESPECT FOR THE WOMEN AND MEN WHO DID SO MUCH FOR SO MANY OF US WITH SO LITTLE. THE LITANY OF NAMES WOULD BE ENDLESS, AND FOR FEAR OF MISSING MANY, SOME OF WHOM HAVE PASSED AWAY, I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SIMPLY SAY THANKS FROM ALL OF US HERE AND FOR THE MILLIONS WHO CANNOT BE HERE.

WE ARE WELL ON OUR WAY INTO THAT JOURNEY THAT BEGAN, NOT TWENTY-NINE YEARS AGO, BUT FAR BACK INTO THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY WITH THE FIRST FIVE BACK CATHOLIC CONGRESSES.

THE QUESTION NOW IS NOT THAT WE HAVE ALL OF THE ANSWERS, MY SISTERS AND BROTHERS, THE QUESTION IS.. WHY ARE WE HERE IN A PLACE AND IN A TIME, WHERE AND WHEN WE CAN WITNESS THE FLOWERED BLOSSOMS AND FRUITS OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH IN THIS GREAT

ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW ORLEANS AND SHARE WITH THIS COMMUNITY OF FAITH THE GOODNESS AND GREATNESS OF OUR OWN ARCHDIOCESE AND DIOCESES? WE COME FIRST AND FOREMOST TO HONOR OUR GOD. WE GATHER HERE TONIGHT TO GIVE GOD THANKS FOR OUR LONG HISTORY OF CATHOLICISM. WE GATHER HERE THIS NIGHT TO SOLICIT GUIDANCE FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT AND FROM MARY, OUR MOTHER. WE ASK THEM TO BE WITH US AS WE ATTEMPT TO CREATE NEW, TIMELY AND POSITIVE ACTIONS ON BEHALF OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES. WE GATHER HERE TONIGHT IN THE SPIRIT OF THAT HYMN THAT SAYS: "LORD, HELP ME TO HOLD OUT. LORD HELP ME TO HOLD OUT UNTIL MY CHANGE COMES." WE GATHER HERE HERE KNOWING FULL WELL AND KNOWING THAT GOD KNOWS FULL WELL THAT WE HAVE HELD OUT FOR SO LONG FOR OUR CHANGE TO COME AND FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS, WE SHALL ALL KNOW, ALL BELIEVE THAT IN THE WORDS OF THE MUSICAL PURLEY IS VICTORIOUS, "THE WORLD AIN'T COMING TO AN END MY FRIENDS, THE WORLD IS JUST COMING TO A START."

IT IS A GOOD TIME FOR US TO HEAR ONCE AGAIN THE WORDS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II, SPOKEN IN THE MOTHERLAND, IN KENYA. YOU WILL SEE THAT IT IS AS THOUGH THE HOLY FATHER WERE SPEAKING TO US HERE TONIGHT, BECAUSE WHAT HE SAID IS SO MUCH OF WHAT WE ARE HOLING OUT UNTIL OUR CHANGE COMES.

OUR HOLY FATHER SAID: "THE FAMILY IS THE FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN COMMUNITY; IT IS THE FIRST AND VITAL CELL OF ANY SOCIETY. THUS THE VITALITY OF ANY COUNTRY WILL ONLY BE AS GREAT AS THE STRENGTH AND VITALITY OF THE FAMILY WITHIN THAT COUNTRY. NO GROUP HAS A MORE INFLUENTIAL ROLE IN THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD.

"BELOVED BROTHERS AND SISTERS: ALL THE FAMILIES THAT MAKE UP THE CHURCH AND ALL THE INDIVIDUALS THAT MAKE UP THE FAMILIES, ALL OF US TOGETHER ARE CALLED TO WALK WITH CHRIST, BEARING WITNESS TO HIS TRUTH IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF OUR DAILY LIVES. IN DOING THIS, WE CAN PERMEATE SOCIETY WITH THE LEAVEN OF THE GOSPEL, WHICH ALONE CAN TRANSFORM IT INTO CHRIST'S KINGDOM--A KINGDOM OF JUSTICE, OF LOVE AND OF PEACE! AMEN."

YES, WE KNOW THAT THE FAMILY IS THE FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN COMMUNITY. THAT IS WHY ALL OF US, IN ALMOST UNANIMOUS CONSENSUS, CHARGED THAT THE FAMILY WOULD BE THE AGENDA ITEM FOR CONGRESS SEVEN. FOR THE LAST FOUR OR FIVE YEARS WE HAVE BEEN TOLD AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN HOW SEVERE THAT CRISIS IS. WE HAVE BEEN REMINDED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT: BLACK CHILDREN ARE THREE TIMES MORE LIKELY THAN WHITES TO LIVE IN SINGLE PARENT HOUSEHOLDS (THIS STATEMENT IS NOT TO DENIGRATE SINGLE PARENTS, BUT REALLY TO HAVE US REFLECT ON THE SUCCESS OF SINGLE PARENTS FACING ALMOST INSURMOUNTABLE ODDS) WE KNOW THAT THEY HAVE SUCCEEDED IN SPITE OF THE DOCUMENTED FACTS INDICATING THAT BIG GOVERNMENT HAS NOT ONLY WISHED TO SEE THEM FAIL, BUT HAVE LEGISLATED AND DECREED AND PROGRAMMED THEM FOR FAILURE. WE KNOW THAT 43.2 PERCENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN LIVE IN POVERTY IN THE WEALTHIEST NATION IN THE WORLD.

AFRICAN AMERICANS NOW ACCOUNT FOR 28.8 PERCENT OF U.S. AIDS CASES. AFRICAN AMERICANS COMPRISE 52 PER CENT OF WOMEN WITH DISEASE, AND AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN REPRESENT 53 PERCENT OF ALL PEDIATRIC AIDS CASES.

"LORD, HELP US TO HOLD OUT, LORD HELP US TO HOLD OUT UNTIL OUR CHANGE COMES!"
HOMICIDE IS THE LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES BETWEEN THE AGES OF 15 AND 34. NEARLY HALF OF ALL U.S. MURDER VICTIMS ARE BLACK.

LORD HELP US TO HOLD OUT, LORD HELP US TO HOLD OUT UNTIL OUR CHANGE COMES!
WHEN AN AFRICAN AMERICAN YOUNGSTER WAS ASKED WHAT HE HOPED FOR IN THE FUTURE HE ANSWERED, "I HOPE I'LL STILL BE ALIVE THIS TIME NEXT YEAR."

"LORD HELP US TO HOLD OUT, LORD HELP US TO HOLD OUT UNTIL OUR CHANGE COMES." WE CANNOT FORGET THAT THE AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY HAS BEEN ON OUR AGENDA FOR A LONG TIME AND WE ARE TRULY GRATEFUL TO NOBC AND THE JOSEPHITES WHO SPONSORED IMPORTANT AND SIGNIFICANT CONFERENCES ON THE FAMILY. IT IS NOW UP TO US TO BUILD ON THE FOUNDATION OF THOSE CONFERENCES AND FOCUS, ENFLESH AND DECIDE WHAT WE ARE TO DO, WHO IS GOING TO DO IT, WHEN WE ARE GOING TO START AND WHAT ARE THE TIME FRAMES WE SET FOR OURSELVES.

WHILE PREPARING THIS SERMON, I COULD NOT BUT REFLECT ON ANOTHER ERA IN THE HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS PEOPLE WHEN THE RULERS OF EGYPT SOUGHT TO BREAK THE VITALITY AND THE POWER OF THE ISRAELITES TO BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT PEOPLE AND ARCHITECTS OF THEIR OWN FUTURE. THE EGYPTIANS INSTITUTED THE MOST EFFICIENT PROGRAM OF DESTROYING THE NATION. THEY BEGAN A SYSTEMATIC SLAUGHTER OF THE MALE CHILDREN. WITHOUT MALES THERE WOULD BE NO ISRAELITES TO BUILD THE NATION PROMISED BY ABRAHAM. IN ANOTHER ERA, A BELEAGUERED KING SOUGHT TO BREAK THE POWER OF THAT NEW KINGDOM OF PEACE AND JUSTICE BY SLAUGHTERING SEVERAL HUNDRED MALE CHILDREN CHILDREN OF THE JEWISH FAMILIES IN THE HOPE THAT AMONG THEM WOULD BE THE MESSIAH, THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD. ON THURSDAY, MAY 7, 1992, THE NEW YORK TIMES' LEAD EDITORIAL ENTITLED "YOUNG BLACK MEN" STATED THE FOLLOWING: "THE FIRES OF LOS ANGELES CAST HARSH NEW LIGHT ON THE WAY AMERICA WRITES OFF PLACES, AND URBAN WASTELANDS THAT ARE MORE PATROLLED THAN POLICED. EVEN WORSE, AMERICA WRITES OFF PEOPLE - ANOTHER GENERATION OF YOUNG BLACK MEN."

THE ARTICLE GOES ON TO STATE MUCH OF THE STATISTICS I HAVE ALREADY MENTIONED. IT CONCLUDES BY STATING: "THERE IS NOTHING INHERENTLY CRIMINAL IN YOUNG BLACK MEN OF THE 1990'S ANY MORE THAN THERE WAS IN YOUNG IMMIGRANT MEN OF THE 1890'S. WHAT IS CRIMINAL IS TO WRITE THEM OFF, FEARFULLY, BLIND TO THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THOUSANDS CAN BE SAVED, FROM LIVES OF CRIME AND FOR LIVES OF DIGNITY."

FROM THE MOMENT THE FIRST BLACK MAN AND WOMAN WERE TAKEN FORCEFULLY FROM THEIR HOMES, FROM THE MOMENT MILLIONS OF BLACK MEN AND WOMEN WERE SYSTEMATICALLY CATEGORIZED AS CHATTEL, WITHOUT RIGHTS, WITHOUT DIGNITY AND WITHOUT A FORUM TO ADDRESS THEIR PLIGHTS, THE BLACK MALE WAS FAIR GAME FOR THE WHIP OF THE SLAVE MASTER AND HIS OVERSEERS. ALMOST FIVE HUNDRED YEARS LATER, NOTHING HAS CHANGED, ONE ONLY HAS TO LOOK AT THE HORRIFYING VIDEO OF THE TRIAL OF RODNEY KING..THE TRIAL THAT TOOK PLACE IN THE STREETS OF LOS ANGELES, TO REALIZE THAT THE BULL WHIP OF THE SLAVE MASTERS AND THEIR OVERSEERS ARE STILL AT WORK IN THE BILLY CLUBS OF UNCARING AND BRUTAL MEN AND WOMEN OF THE 92"S.

"LORD HELP US TO HOLD OUT, LORD HELP US TO HOLD OUT UNTIL OUR CHANGE COMES."

SURELY THESE ARE TIMES FOR DISCOURAGEMENT, FOR GIVING UP, FOR STRIKING OUT, REGARDLESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES FOR US AND OUR CHILDREN FOR GENERATIONS TO COME...BUT NOT FOR THOSE OF US WHO TRULY BELIEVE.

JUST THE OTHER DAY A FRIEND OF MINE, SR. ROGER THIBODEAUX, SENT ME THE FOLLOWING POEM ENTITLED LINEAGE.

"MY GRANDMOTHERS WERE STRONG. THEY FOLLOWED PLOWS AND BENT TO TOIL. THEY MOVED THROUGH FIELDS SOWING SEED. THEY TOUCHED EARTH AND GRAIN GREW. THEY WERE FULL OF STURDINESS AND SINGING.

MY GRANDMOTHERS WERE STRONG. MY GRANDMOTHERS ARE FULL OF MEMORIES. SMELLING OF SOAP AND ONIONS AND WET CLAY.
WITH VEINS ROLLING ROUGHLY OVER QUICK HANDS.
THEY HAVE MANY CLEAN WORDS TO SAY.

MY GRAND MOTHERS WERE STRONG..
WHY AM I NOT AS THEY?"

"LORD HELP US TO HOLD OUT, LORD HELP US TO HOLD OUT UNTIL OUR CHANGE COMES."

WHILE THERE ARE SO MANY, EVEN AMONG US WHO ARE SAYING THAT WE HAVE HEARD ALL WE NEED TO HEAR ABOUT RACISM AND THAT OUR PREOCCUPATION WITH THE PHILOSOPHY OF VICTIMIZATION IS MORE HARMFUL THAN GOOD, I SAY THAT MAYBE WE SHOULD DO LESS TALKING AND MORE DOING..~~THEN~~ IF WE DON'T TALK ABOUT IT, NO ONE WILL DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT..IF WE DENY IT, WE ARE DOOMED TO LIVE WITH IT AND DIE BY IT. SO YES, WE MUST CONTINUE TO TALK ABOUT IT, TO SHOUT ABOUT IT, TO WRITE ABOUT IT BUT WE MUST DO MORE. WE MUST CHART OUT A COURSE OF ACTION, WE MUST HUNT IT DOWN, ISOLATE IT, AND ANNIHILATE IT..ANYWHERE AND EVERYWHERE WE EVEN SUSPECT THAT IT EXISTS.
AND SO WE MUST CRY OUT AGAIN AND AGAIN:

"LORD HELP US TO HOLD OUT UNTIL THIS DEED IS DONE, LORD HELP US TO HOLD OUT UNTIL WE MAKE OUR CHANGE COME."

LORD HELP US TO PRAY MORE WITH MORE FAITH. TO RESPECT EACH OTHER WITH MORE LOVE AND UNDERSTANDING, HELP US TO WORK TOGETHER, NOT AS COMPETITORS, BUT AS COLLABORATORS FOR A COMMON CAUSE. LORD, HELP US TO FIND SHELTER, BECOME BETTER EDUCATED IN THE THINGS THAT REALLY COUNT, AND ABOVE ALL, HELP US TO START REDIRECTING OUR INWARD ANGER AND FRUSTRATIONS INTO CHALLENGING PROJECTS FOR THE GOOD OF ALL. //

LET US CALL UPON THOSE OF OUR ANCESTORS WHO WERE MOST RECENTLY WITH TO ALL OF US. WE CALL UPON HAROLD PERRY, THEA BOWMAN, DOLORES HARRELL, BEDE ABRAM, ANTHONY BOURGES, MARK FIGARO AND OTHERS WHO WERE HERE WITH US IN OUR CONGRESS IN 1987, BUT WHO ARE GONE FROM US, BUT WHO HAVE NOT ABANDONED US..WE ASK THEM TO HELP US HOLD OUT, TO HELP US HOLD OUT UNTIL WE MAKE OUR CHANGE.

I HAVE ALWAYS FOUND A GREAT DEAL OF MY INSPIRATION FROM BROADWAY PLAYS, LIKE FIDDLER ON THE ROOF, WHICH DESCRIBES HOW WE AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE CHURCH AND IN SOCIETY ARE CONSTANTLY ATTEMPTING TO FIDDLE SONGS OF JOY STANDING ON A SLANTED ROOF, OR LIKE THE WHIZ, WHO IS A CHRIST FIGURE OF EMPOWERMENT, THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN LES MISERABLES LIKE OUR OWN FREEDOM RIDERS, WHO WERE WILLING FACE DEATH IN ORDER TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE, OR LIKE PURLY, IN WHICH THE EVIL ONE IS OVERCOME BY A DETERMINED OPPRESSED PEOPLE, STRUGGLING TO FIND THEIR OWN SOURCE OF STRENGTHS AND THE REASONS WHY THINGS ARE BETTER DOWN HOME WHERE THEY BELONG.

ALLOW ME TO QUOTE FROM PURLY (I WISH I HAD THE VOICE TO SING IT AS SO MANY OF MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS HAVE AND DO SING OUT TO THE LORD IN THEIR HOMILIES AND TALKS.)

I SHALL QUOTE THE WORDS OF THE WOMEN SINGING ABOUT THEIR MEN.

"CHILD I KNOW YOUR FEELING WAITING BY THE DOOR, PRAYING FOR THE MAN YOU LOVE AND WONDERING ALL FOR WHAT. BUT HAVE A LITTLE FAITH IN HIM, YOU JUST MIGHT MAKE HIM STRONG. MAYBE WE'VE BEEN FRIGHTENED FOR THE MEN WE LOVE TOO LONG.

HE CAN DO IT IF YOU TELL HIM, HE CAN DO IT. HE'LL BELIEVE THERE IS NOTHING TO IT AND HE'LL TRY.

HE'S A GIANT, IF YOU TELL HIM, HE'S A GIANT. HE'LL BELIEVE AND BE DEFIANT AND HE MIGHT FALL, BUT HE WON'T BREAK IN TWO. GIRL, DON'T LET HIM BACK AWAY TILL HE GETS TOO OLD, DON'T LET ON THAT YOU'RE AFRAID, 'CAUSE FEAR CAN BE CATCHING WORSE THAN A COLD.

"HE CAN MAKE IT, IF YOU TELL HIM, HE CAN MAKE IT, HE'LL BELIEVE IT IF HE KNOWS THAT YOU BELIEVE IT TOO. JUST PUT YOUR FAITH IN HIM, FOR WITH YOUR LOVE, THERE'S NOTHING THAT YOUR MAN CAN'T DO."

IF YOU ARE WONDERING, MY DEAR SISTERS AND BROTHERS WHY I CHOSE TO QUOTE SOMETHING

THAT IS ADDRESSED TO WOMEN AND TO MEN INDIRECTLY, JUST LOOK AROUND YOU. THIS IS A CONGRESS MADE UP LARGELY BY WOMEN.

THESE ARE WORDS SO FITTING FOR ATTENTION WITH RESPECT TO OUR THEME "THE AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE". I READ THESE WORDS TO SPEAK SPECIFICALLY FOR OUR AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES, FOR THOSE WE KNOW AND LOVE AND LIVE WITH AND FOR THOSE WE DON'T KNOW. FOR THOSE STRUGGLING TO ADJUST TO AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM BENT ON WRITING THEM OFF AS FAILURES, FOR THOSE WITHOUT JOBS AND UNABLE TO PROVIDE FOR THEMSELVES OR THEIR FAMILIES, FOR THOSE HOMELESS AND FULL OF DESPAIR. IT IS TRUE THAT THEIR SELF ESTEEM HAS BEEN DESTROYED BY THE IMPACT OF RACISM..UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND A JUDICIAL SYSTEM THAT SOMETIMES LOOKS THE OTHER WAY. INTERNALLY WE MUST WORK TOGETHER TO REBUILD THAT IMAGE..TO NEGATE THE OFTEN DISTORTED VIEW PORTRAYED BY THE MEDIA....

YES, YES, HE CAN DO IT, YOU CAN DO IT, AND WE CAN DO IT. IF WE BELIEVE AND IF WE TRY. MY SISTERS, WE NEED YOU. YOU ABOVE ALL OTHERS CAN HELP US TO HOLD ON UNTIL WE MAKE OUR CHANGE.

IT OCCURS TO ME TONIGHT, THAT I MAY NOT, LIKE SOME OF YOU, BE AT THE NEXT CONGRESS. HOWEVER, WHEREVER AND WHENEVER THE NEXT CONGRESS TAKES PLACE, I AM SURE THAT YOU WILL HAVE ALMOST ARRIVED AT THE PROMISED LAND OF INCLUSION IN THE CHURCH, BECAUSE WHEN YOU LEAVE HERE, WHEN WE LEAVE HERE, WE SHALL HAVE A BETTER IDEA AND MUCH MORE FOCUSED AGENDA AND A NEW FOUND DETERMINATION TO GO ON AND TO KEEP ON KEEPING ON TO MAKE OUR CHANGES. BECAUSE AS ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PASSAGES IN THE PASTORAL WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD TELLS US:

"LET US WHO ARE THE CHILDREN OF PAIN BE NOW A BRIDGE OF RECONCILIATION. LET US WHO ARE THE OFFSPRING OF VIOLENCE BECOME THE CHANNELS OF COMPASSION. LET US, THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF BONDAGE BE THE BRINGERS OF PEACE" AND FROM BROTHERS AND SISTERS TO US

"FOR WE ARE CHILDREN OF THE AGE TO COME, WHEN THE FIRST SHALL BE LAST AND THE LAST SHALL BE FIRST, WHEN BLESSED ARE THEY WHO SERVE CHRIST THE LORD IN ALL HIS BROTHERS AND SISTERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO ARE POOR AND SUFFER INJUSTICE."

"LORD HELP ME TO HOLD
OUT,
LORD HELP ME TO HOLD OUT,
LORD HELP ME TO HOLD OUT
UNTIL MY CHANGE COMES.

"MY WAY MAY NOT BE EASY
YOU DID NOT SAY THAT IT

WOULD BE.
BUT IF IT GETS DARK,
I CAN'T SEE MY WAY,
YOU TOLD ME TO PUT MY
TRUST IN THEE,
THAT'S WHY I'M ASKING
YOU.

"LORD, HELP ME TO HOLD
OUT,
LORD, HELP ME TO HOLD OUT
UNTIL MY CHANGE COMES.

"LORD, HELP ME TO HOLD
OUT!"

LORD, HELP ME TO HOLD
OUT!

LORD, HELP ME TO HOLD
OUT!

LORD, HELP ME TO HOLD
OUT!

LORD, HELP ME TO HOLD
OUT!

LORD, HELP ME TO HOLD
OUT!"

I BELIEVE I CAN HOLD OUT!
I BELIEVE I CAN HOLD OUT!
I BELIEVE I CAN HOLD OUT,
UNTIL MY CHANGE COMES.