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The [Jesuit Antiracism Sodality](#) (JARS) will hold a national retreat centering Black spirituality this summer, part of an ongoing effort to foster awareness of African American issues within the world's largest religious order.

The individually directed "[The God of Us All: Praying with Black Spirituality](#)" retreat for Jesuits and laypeople will take place June 24-July 3 at the Loyola University Retreat & Ecology Campus in Woodstock, Illinois, just outside of Chicago.

"Directors for this retreat will be individuals who have been formed in both Black and Ignatian spirituality. Our days together will begin and end in communal prayer, including daily Mass, to highlight the daily graces which frame this sacred time of reflection and prayer," reads an event description.

"Throughout the retreat, Black sacred song, optional films, and other supplemental prayer resources, illustrating the Black experience, will enrich the graces of each day and serve as guideposts to the grace."

The Jesuit Antiracism Sodality ministry dates back to the late 2010s, when an interracial group of Jesuit seminarians petitioned the order to recognize the sodality as a ministry of the USA Midwest Province, with a task force headed by the young men in formation.

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Their stated goals were to "analyze where systemic racism is at work in our current way of proceeding and advise leadership on how to make systematic decisions to deepen our accountability to people of color" and to "transform the Midwest Province, and in turn our apostolic works, into a truly anti-racist organization."

According to scholar and former Jesuit [Lorenzo Herman](#), the group was founded in the wake of media attention the order received for the revelation of its infamous [1838 slave sale](#) at Georgetown University in Washington. Therein, 272 men, women and children were sold downriver to Louisiana — though it was only the most prominent of various slave trading activities conducted by the Jesuits in the U.S. over the course of nearly two centuries.

The fallout in recent years has included various actions by the order to atone for its slaveholding and anti-Black discrimination. Senior Black Jesuits like Frs. [Joseph Brown](#), Greg Chisholm and James Pierce have long been involved in efforts to promote Black acceptance in the order and have helped lead the sodality's previous three retreats.

"The Black Jesuits have given an opportunity to white Jesuit allies in groups such as JARS to truly see what it is like to be a Black man in a religious order that cares so little about their humanity and the people they come from," [wrote](#) Herman in his 2022 dissertation.

The eight-day retreat in Illinois will include members of the sodality from around the country, as the organization has expanded since its founding to other provinces of the Jesuits. The leaders of the retreat come from the Black community and span Catholic and Protestant backgrounds.

Registration was open through May 8, at a cost of \$1,100, with scholarships available.