

A Litany of Lament for the American Police and Court Systems

**Based on the U.S. Department of Justice Report
on the Ferguson Police Department**

(All numbers in parentheses are page and paragraph numbers in the report)

Reader

The report of the Department of Justice on the Ferguson, Missouri police department is not just an indictment of one city, but of a nation broken by deep divisions of race, class and privilege. It is the story of one city but reflects the voices that are heard in cities throughout our nation. It is a record of the lament of people of color in this country who have been crying out for decades and even generations.

The report is not just an indictment of the policing and court systems but of those of us of privilege who benefit from those systems. Those of us who have turned a deaf ear to these cries, who have not used our power and privilege to reform these systems and who indeed have benefitted from these systems. We who are people of privilege in this society share in this lament but also in the confession of sin. And together all of us commit to an amendment of life that will lead us to the beloved community where all are reconciled to one another as sisters and brothers.

Reader

A Reading from the Book of Exodus

Then the LORD said to Moses, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.' But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?' He said, 'I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.'

Litanist

Holy and loving God, giver of all good gifts

Have mercy upon us.

Holy and loving God, in whose image all people are made.

Have mercy upon us.

Holy and loving God, protector and deliverer of the weak and the vulnerable

Have mercy upon us.

From law enforcement practices shaped by focus on revenue rather than public safety needs. (2, 1)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From police seeing African American neighborhoods less as constituents to be protected and more as potential offenders and sources of revenue. (2,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From police expecting and demanding compliance even when they lack legal authority. (2,4)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From police interpreting the exercise of free speech as unlawful disobedience, innocent movements as physical threats, and indications of mental or physical illness as belligerence. (2,4)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From police supervisors and leadership doing little to ensure officers act in accordance with law and policy, and rarely responding meaningfully to civilian complaints of officer misconduct. (2,4)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From a pattern of stops without reasonable suspicion and arrests without probable cause, infringement on free expression, retaliation for protected expression and use of excessive force. (2,4)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From court practices that violate the 14th amendment's due process and equal protection requirements. (3,2)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From court practices that impose unnecessary harm overwhelmingly on African-American individuals and run counter to public safety. (3,2)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From courts issuing arrest warrants not on the basis of public safety needs but as a routine response to missed court appearances and required fine payments. (3,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From court practices that impose a particular hardship on the most vulnerable residents, especially upon those living in or near poverty. (4,2)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From policing that both reflects and reinforces racial bias, including stereotyping, the harms of which are borne disproportionately by African Americans and is at least in part intentional. (4,4)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From police who repeatedly and disproportionately use force against African Americans (5,2)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From police who repeated turning of dogs exclusively against African Americans (5,2)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From police who release dogs on unarmed subjects unreasonably and before attempting to use force less likely to cause injury (28,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From police who use dogs not to counter a physical threat but to inflict punishment (33,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

Reader

In November 2013, an officer deployed a canine to bite and detain a fleeing subject even though the officer knew the suspect was unarmed. The officer deemed the subject, an African American male who was walking down the street, suspicious because he appeared to walk away when he saw the officer. The officer stopped him and frisked him, finding no weapons. The officer then ran his name for warrants. When the man heard the dispatcher say over the police radio that he had outstanding warrants—the report does not specify whether the warrants were for failing to appear in municipal court or to pay owed fines, or something more serious—he ran. The officer followed him and released his dog, which bit the man on both arms. The officer’s supervisor found the force justified because the officer released the dog “fearing that the subject was armed,” even though the officer had already determined the man was unarmed. (33,2)

Litanist

From excuse-making on behalf of city governments that reflects racial bias and stereotyping. (5,5)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From the blaming of “outside agitators” on the state of distrust and division and the denial of existing poverties of trust between citizens and the police. (5,6)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From patterns of unnecessarily aggressive and at times unlawful policing that reinforce the harm of discriminatory stereotypes, discourage a culture of accountability and neglect community engagements. (5,6 – 6,1)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From a rejection of community policing efforts (6,1)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From officers who compete to see who can issue the largest number of citations during a single stop (11,1)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From weak systems of police supervision, review, and accountability that send a potent message to officers that violations of law and policy will be tolerated provided they continue to generate revenue. (11,4 – 12,1)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From city governments that direct police to develop enforcement strategies and initiatives not to better protect the public, but to raise more revenue (13,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From court systems that prioritize revenue generation over public service. (14,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From officers violating the Fourth Amendment in stopping people without reasonable suspicion, arresting them without probable cause and using unreasonable force (15,4)

Good Lord, deliver us.

Reader

In July 2013 police encountered an African-American man in a parking lot while on their way to arrest someone else at an apartment building. Police knew that the encountered man was not the person they had come to arrest. Nonetheless, without even reasonable suspicion, they handcuffed the man, placed him in the back of a patrol car, and ran his record. It turned out he was the intended arrestee's landlord. The landlord went on to help the police enter the person's unit to effect the arrest, but he later filed a complaint alleging racial discrimination and unlawful detention. Ignoring the central fact that they had handcuffed a man and put him in a police car despite having no reason to believe he had done anything wrong, a sergeant vigorously defended the Ferguson Police Department's actions, characterizing the

detention as “minimal” and pointing out that the car was air conditioned. Even temporary detention, however, constitutes a deprivation of liberty and must be justified under the Fourth Amendment. (17,3)

In the summer of 2012, a 32-year-old African-American man sat in his car cooling off after playing basketball in a Ferguson public park. An officer pulled up behind the man’s car, blocking him in, and demanded the man’s Social Security number and identification. Without any cause, the officer accused the man of being a pedophile, referring to the presence of children in the park, and ordered the man out of his car for a pat-down, although the officer had no reason to believe the man was armed. The officer also asked to search the man’s car. The man objected, citing his constitutional rights. In response, the officer arrested the man, reportedly at gunpoint, charging him with eight violations of Ferguson’s municipal code. One charge, Making a False Declaration, was for initially providing the short form of his first name (e.g., “Mike” instead of “Michael”), and an address which, although legitimate, was different from the one on his driver’s license. Another charge was for not wearing a seat belt, even though he was seated in a parked car. The officer also charged the man both with having an expired operator’s license, and with having no operator’s license in his possession. The man told us that, because of these charges, he lost his job as a contractor with the federal government that he had held for years. (3,1)

Litanist

From officers frequently infringing on residents’ First Amendment rights, interfering with their right to record police activities and making enforcement decisions based on the content of individuals’ expression. (15,4)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From police arresting people for talking back to officers, recording public activities and lawfully protesting perceived injustices (24, 4)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From a police culture that relies on the exercise of police power – however unlawful – to stifle unwelcome criticism. (28, 2)

Good Lord, deliver us.

Reader

On February 9, 2015, several individuals were protesting outside the Ferguson police station on the six-month anniversary of Michael Brown’s death. According to protesters, and consistent with several video recordings

from that evening, the protesters stood peacefully in the police department's parking lot, on the sidewalks in front of it, and across the street. Video footage shows that two FPD vehicles abruptly accelerated from the police parking lot into the street. An officer announced, "everybody here's going to jail," causing the protesters to run. Video shows that as one man recorded the police arresting others, he was arrested for interfering with police action. Officers pushed him to the ground, began handcuffing him, and announced, "stop resisting or you're going to get tased." It appears from the video, however, that the man was neither interfering nor resisting. A protester in a wheelchair who was live streaming the protest was also arrested. Another officer moved several people with cameras away from the scene of the arrests, warning them against interfering and urging them to back up or else be arrested for Failure to Obey. The sergeant shouted at those filming that they would be arrested for Manner of Walking if they did not back away out of the street, even though it appears from the video recordings that the protesters and those recording were on the sidewalk at most, if not all, times. Six people were arrested during this incident. It appears that officers' escalation of this incident was unnecessary and in response to derogatory comments written in chalk on the FPD parking lot asphalt and on a police vehicle. (27,5 – 28,1)

Litanist

From police who make enforcement decisions based on what subjects say or how they say it. (25,2)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From inadequate supervision of officers or review of enforcement actions (15, 5)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From a pattern of suspicionless, legally unsupportable stops by police. (18,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From police routinely abusing the "failure to comply" charge (19,2)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From police repeatedly abusing the code provision requiring individuals to identify themselves to a police officer (20,2)

Good Lord, deliver us.

Reader

In another case, from March 2013, officers responded to the police station to take custody of a person wanted on a state warrant. When they arrived, they encountered a different man— not the subject of the warrant—who happened to be leaving the station. Having nothing to connect the man to the warrant subject, other than his presence at the station, the officers nonetheless stopped him and asked that he identify himself. The man asserted his rights, asking the officers “Why do you need to know?” and declining to be frisked. When the man then extended his identification toward the officers, at their request, the officers interpreted his hand motion as an attempted assault and took him to the ground. Without articulating reasonable suspicion or any other justification for the initial detention, the officers arrested the man on two counts of Failure to Comply and two counts of Resisting Arrest. (21,4)

Litanist

From use of a police-run “wanted” system that circumvents judicial review and the warrant system, leading to numerous unconstitutional arrests. (22,3 and 23, 3)
Good Lord, deliver us.

From officers quick to escalate encounters with subjects they perceive to be disobeying their orders or resisting arrest (28,3)
Good Lord, deliver us.

From police reliance on Tasers, where less force – or no force at all – would do (28,3)
Good Lord, deliver us.

Reader

In September 2012, an officer drive-stunned an African-American woman who he had placed in the back of his patrol car but who had stretched out her leg to block him from closing the door. The woman was in handcuffs. In May 2013, officers drive-stunned a handcuffed African-American man who verbally refused to get out of the back seat of a police car once it had arrived at the jail. The man did not physically resist arrest or attempt to assault the officers. According to the man, he was also punched in the face and head. That allegation was neither reported by the involved officers nor investigated by their supervisor, who dismissed it. (30,2)

In January 2013, a patrol sergeant stopped an African-American man after he saw the man talk to an individual in a truck and then walk away. The sergeant

detained the man, although he did not articulate any reasonable suspicion that criminal activity was afoot. When the man declined to answer questions or submit to a frisk—which the sergeant sought to execute despite articulating no reason to believe the man was armed—the sergeant grabbed the man by the belt, drew his ECW, and ordered the man to comply. The man crossed his arms and objected that he had not done anything wrong. Video captured by the ECW’s built-in camera shows that the man made no aggressive movement toward the officer. The sergeant fired the ECW, applying a five-second cycle of electricity and causing the man to fall to the ground. The sergeant almost immediately applied the ECW again, which he later justified in his report by claiming that the man tried to stand up. The video makes clear, however, that the man never tried to stand—he only writhed in pain on the ground. The video also shows that the sergeant applied the ECW nearly continuously for 20 seconds, longer than represented in his report. The man was charged with Failure to Comply and Resisting Arrest, but no independent criminal violation.

(34,3)

Litanist

From police using excessive force disproportionately against African-Americans. (28,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From police using force as punishment for non-compliance with an order that lacked legal authority (34,5)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From a tendency for police to use unnecessary force against vulnerable groups such as people with mental health conditions or cognitive disabilities, and juvenile students (28,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

Reader

In August 2010, an officer responded to a call about an African-American man walking onto the highway and lying down on the pavement. Seeing that the man was sweating, acting jittery, and had dilated pupils, the officer believed he was on drugs. The man was cooperative at first but balked, pushing the officer back when the officer tried to handcuff him for safety reasons. The officer struck the man several times with his Asp® baton—including once in

the head, a form of deadly force—causing significant bleeding. Two other officers then deployed their ECWs against the man a total of five times. (36,4)

Litanist

From police treating routine student discipline issues as criminal matters and using force when communication and de-escalation techniques would likely resolve the conflict. (37,2)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From a failure of police training in mental health, counseling and the development of the teenage brain; from a lack of priority given to de-escalation and conflict resolution, and from insufficient appreciation for the negative educational and long-term outcomes resulting from treating disciplinary concerns as crimes and using forces on students (38,1)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From system lack of concern among police over whether officer conduct is consistent with the law or promotes police legitimacy (38,2)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From frequent lack of reporting of use of force by police (38,4)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From policing systems that believe that any level of resistance justifies any level of force (40,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From policing systems that refuse to look for patterns of misconduct by officers or units in using force (41,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From court and policing systems that take minor municipal code violations and punish them with multiple arrests, jail time, and payments exceeding the cost of the original ticket many times over (42,2)

Good Lord, deliver us.

Reader

One woman received two parking tickets for a single violation in 2007 that then totaled \$151 plus fees. Over seven years later, she still owed Ferguson \$541—after already paying \$550 in fines and fees, having multiple arrest warrants issued against her, and being arrested and jailed on several occasions. Another woman told us that when she went to court to try to pay \$100 on a \$600 outstanding balance, the Court Clerk refused to take the partial payment, even though the woman explained that she was a single

mother and could not afford to pay more that month. A 90-yearold man had a warrant issued for his arrest after he failed to timely pay the five citations Ferguson Police Department issued to him during a single traffic stop in 2013. An 83-year-old man had a warrant issued against him when he failed to timely resolve his Derelict Auto violation. A 67-year-old woman told us she was stopped and arrested by a Ferguson police officer for an outstanding warrant for failure to pay a trash-removal citation. She did not know about the warrant until her arrest, and the court ultimately charged her \$1,000 in fines, which she continues to pay off in \$100 monthly increments despite being on a limited, fixed income. (42,2)

Litanist

From courts that routinely use arrest warrants to secure collection and compliance when a person misses a required court appearance or payment (42,3)
Good Lord, deliver us.

From courts that impose substantial and unnecessary barriers to the challenge or resolution of municipal code violations (43,3)
Good Lord, deliver us.

From courts that make it difficult for people to know details of their citations, rules for payment, court procedures and other rights and responsibilities and then punish people for lack of compliance (45,2 – 3)
Good Lord, deliver us.

From needlessly requiring in-court appearances for most-code violations, causing an escalation in violations and fines. (47,2-3)
Good Lord, deliver us.

From a state system that mandates driver’s license suspensions for failure to appear or pay then further punishes when people who can’t drive don’t show up for a court appearance. (50,2)
Good Lord, deliver us.

From the disproportionate and high burden high fines coupled with inadequate ability-to-pay determinations and insufficient alternatives to immediate payment place on people living in or near poverty (52,3)
Good Lord, deliver us.

From courts imposing unduly harsh penalties for missed payments or appearances (54,3)
Good Lord, deliver us.

From unclear and inconsistent practices for setting and receiving bond (59,2-3)
Good Lord, deliver us.

From courts imposing bonds exceeding the amount owed to the court and not grounded in any public safety need. (59,4)
Good Lord, deliver us.

From police and courts who routinely arrest on a warrant for minor violations people who cannot afford bond and hold them for 72 hours before release. (60,2)
Good Lord, deliver us.

From prolonged detentions of individuals despite the lack of public safety need (60,5)
Good Lord, deliver us.

From a system where African Americans are twice as likely to be searched during a vehicular stop, twice as likely to receive a citation and 2 1/3 times more likely to be arrested (62,4)
Good Lord, deliver us.

From policing that uses force in nearly 90% of cases involving African Americans. (62,5)
Good Lord, deliver us.

From policing that disproportionately targets African Americans on a broad array of charges while dismissing those charges a disproportionately small amount (62,8)
Good Lord, deliver us.

From policing driven at least in part by intentional discrimination in violation of the equal protection clause of the 14th amendment. (62,3)
Good Lord, deliver us.

From a comprehensive municipal justice system that, at each juncture, enforces the law more harshly against African Americans than others. (63, 5)
Good Lord, deliver us.

From policing that gives a disproportionate number of African Americans multiple citations when stopped (66,2)
Good Lord, deliver us.

From policing that disproportionately charges African Americans for crimes of all types (66,3)
Good Lord, deliver us.

From court systems that disproportionately burden African Americans with additional events and tasks before a case is resolved (68,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From court systems that disparately impact African Americans not only in procedures but in discretionary rulings in individual cases (69,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From court systems that dismiss cases less often for African Americans than for other defendants (69,4)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From policing and court practices that violate Title VI and the Safe Streets Act (69,5)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From policing that targets African Americans more often for searches despite them being less likely to have contraband on them (71,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From police, court and city officials who exhibit sinful racism in emails and conversations (72,1)

Good Lord, deliver us.

Reader

- A November 2008 email stated that President Barack Obama would not be President for very long because “what black man holds a steady job for four years.”
- A March 2010 email mocked African Americans through speech and familial stereotypes, using a story involving child support. One line from the email read: “I be so glad that dis be my last child support payment! Month after month, year after year, all dose payments!”
- An April 2011 email depicted President Barack Obama as a chimpanzee.
- A May 2011 email stated: “An African-American woman in New Orleans was admitted into the hospital for a pregnancy termination. Two weeks later she received a check for \$5,000. She phoned the hospital to ask who it was from. The hospital said, ‘Crimestoppers.’”
- A June 2011 email described a man seeking to obtain “welfare” for his dogs because they are “mixed in color, unemployed, lazy, can’t speak English and have no frigging clue who their Daddies are.”
- An October 2011 email included a photo of a bare-chested group of dancing women, apparently in Africa, with the caption, “Michelle Obama’s High School Reunion.”

- A December 2011 email included jokes that are based on offensive stereotypes about Muslims.

Litanist

From a lack of courage of officers and court officials to stand up against racism, and systems that suppress dissent against racist comments and policies (72,9)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From police supervisors who make racist comments and jokes and establish a toxic culture of racism in their departments. (73,1)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From using racial stereotyping in defense of police and court policies that target people of color (74,2)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From city officials who use their privilege to avoid fines and prosecution that is mandated for others (74,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From societal racism that distinguishes people of color from “normal” or “regular” people (76,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From police and courts’ failure to evaluate or correct practices that have long resulted in disparate racial impact. (76,5)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From public officials who use racial stereotypes to explain the lack of trust between the police and the African American community. (79,2)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From years of unlawful and unfair law enforcement practices by police and municipal courts that have led to disconnect and distrust with communities of color (79,4)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From long histories of verbal abuse of people of color by police during routine interactions (80,1)

Good Lord, deliver us.

Reader

In December 2011, an African-American man alleged that as he was standing outside of Wal-Mart, an officer called him a “stupid motherf****r” and a

“bastard.” According to the man, a lieutenant was on the scene and did nothing to reproach the officer, instead threatening to arrest the man. In April 2012, officers allegedly called an African-American woman a “bitch” and a “mental case” at the jail following an arrest. In June 2011, a 60-year-old man complained that an officer verbally harassed him while he stood in line to see the judge in municipal court. According to the man, the officer repeatedly ordered him to move forward as the line advanced and, because he did not advance far enough, turned to the other court-goers and joked, “he is hooked on phonics.” Another concern we heard from many African-American residents, and saw in the files we reviewed, was of casual intimidation by FPD officers, including threats to draw or fire their weapons, often for seemingly little or no cause. In September 2012, a 28-year resident of Ferguson complained to the Ferguson Police Department about a traffic stop during which a lieutenant approached with a loud and confrontational manner with his hand on his holstered gun. The resident, who had a military police background, noted that the lieutenant’s behavior, especially having his hand on his gun, ratcheted up the tension level, and he questioned why the lieutenant had been so aggressive. In another incident captured on video and discussed below in more detail, an officer placed his gun on a wall or post and pointed it back and forth to each of two store employees as he talked to them while they took the trash out late one night. In another case discussed above, a person reported that an Ferguson Police officer removed his ECW during a traffic stop and continuously tapped the ECW on the roof of the person’s car. These written complaints reported to the Ferguson Police Department are consistent with complaints we heard from community members during our investigation about officers casually threatening to hurt or even shoot them. (80,1-2)

Litanist

From police who impose unnecessary negative consequences on people of color for being victims of crime or cooperating with the police.(81,2)

Good Lord, deliver us.

Reader

A woman called the Ferguson Police Department to report a domestic disturbance. By the time the police arrived, the woman’s boyfriend had left. The police looked through the house and saw indications that the boyfriend lived there. When the woman told police that only she and her brother were listed on the home’s occupancy permit, the officer placed the woman under

arrest for the permit violation and she was jailed. In another instance, after a woman called police to report a domestic disturbance and was given a summons for an occupancy permit violation, she said, according to the officer's report, that she "hated the Ferguson Police Department and will never call again, even if she is being killed." In another incident, a young African-American man was shot while walking on the road with three friends. The police department located and interviewed two of the friends about the shooting. After the interview, they arrested and jailed one of these cooperating witnesses, who was 19 years old, on an outstanding municipal warrant.

Litanist

From police refusing to hold officers accountable when they violate law or policy (82,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From police tolerating officer misconduct at the same time as they rabidly enforce the smallest code violations, effectively having two sets of rules for police and citizens. (82,4)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From police and court systems that actively discourage individuals from making complaints against police and discourage city and police staff from accepting them. (82,6)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From a policing system that breeds fear of retaliation should people report misconduct or even merely speak out as witnesses to police misconduct. (83,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From routine dismissal and failure to investigate charges of police misconduct (83,4)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From police systems that intentionally don't treat allegations of misconduct as complaints even where it believes the officer actually committed the misconduct (84,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

Reader

The district manager of a retail store called a commander to tell him that he had a video recording that showed an Ferguson Police officer pull up to the store at about midnight while two employees were taking out the trash, take

out his weapon, and put it on top of a concrete wall, pointed at the two employees. When the employees said they were just taking out the trash and asked the officer if he needed them to take off their coats so that he could see their uniforms, the officer told the employees that he knew they were employees and that if he had not known “I would have put you on the ground.” The commander related in an email to the sergeant and lieutenant that “there is no reason to doubt the Gen. Manager because he said he watched the video and he clearly saw a weapon—maybe the sidearm or the taser.” Nonetheless, despite noting that “we don’t need cowboy” and the “major concern” of the officer taking his weapon out of his holster and placing it on a wall, the commander concluded, “[n]othing for you to do with this other than make a mental note and for you to be on the lookout for that kind of behavior.” (84,3)

Litanist

From police systems that consistently take the word of the officer over the word of the complainant, even when the officer’s word is at odds with objective evidence. (85,2)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From police systems where officers lying is not even grounds for a formal investigation (85,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From police systems that refuse to engage in any kind of community policing or community engagement (86,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

From police systems that do not represent the racial diversity of the community population (88,3)

Good Lord, deliver us.

Holy God, who forgives all the sins of the penitent

Have mercy upon us

Holy God, who forgives all the sins of the penitent

Have mercy upon us

Holy God, who forgives all the sins of the penitent

Have mercy upon us

In your mercy, Holy God, forgive the sins of this city and this nation and grant us grace to be part of a new and better way. Bind us together across the lines of race,

class and privilege that divide us. Make us your beloved community of peace, justice and mercy.

Bring justice through us, Holy God.

Come down with transforming power, Holy God. Come down and through us make our systems of policing and justice truly protect and serve your people.

Help us recognize the harms caused by our law enforcement practices, and bring about diligent, committed collaboration with our communities. (6,2)

Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us provide better training, limits on officer discretion, increased supervision and more robust accountability systems for our police. (78, 4)

Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us better efforts attract and hire a more diverse group of qualified police officers (89,3)

Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us implement a robust system of true community policing (90)

Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us focus stop, search, ticketing and arrest practices on community protection.(91)

Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us increase tracking, review and analysis of police stop, search, ticketing and arrest practices (91)

Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us change police force use, reporting, review and response to encourage de-escalation and the use of the minimal force necessary in a situation (92)

Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us implement police policies and training to improve interactions with vulnerable people (93)

Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us change police response to students to avoid criminalizing youth while maintaining a learning environment (94)

Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us implement measures to reduce bias and its impact on police behavior (94)

Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us improve and increase the training of police (94)
Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us increase civilian involvement in police decision making (95)
Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us improve officer supervision (95)
Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us recruit, hire and promote to increase diversity of race and gender in police forces (95)
Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us develop mechanisms to more effectively respond to allegations of officer misconduct (96)
Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us publically sharing information about the nature and impact of police activities (96)
Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us make municipal court processes more transparent (97)
Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us provide complete and accurate information to a person charged with a municipal violation (97)
Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us change court procedures for tracking and resolving municipal charges to simplify court processes and expand available payment options (98)
Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us review preset fine amounts and implementing systems for fine reduction (98)
Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us develop effective ability-to-pay assessment systems and improving data collection regarding imposed fines.(99)
Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us revise payment plan procedures and providing alternatives to fine payments for resolving municipal charges (99)
Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us reform trial procedures to ensure full compliance with due process requirements (99)

Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us stop using arrest warrants as a means of collecting owed fines and fees (100)

Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us allow warrants to be recalled without the payment of bond (100)

Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us modify bond amounts and bond and detention procedures (101)

Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us consistently provide “compliance letters” necessary for driver’s license reinstatement after a person makes an appearance following a license suspension.

(101)

Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us close cases that remain on a court’s docket solely because of failure to appear charges or bond forfeitures (102)

Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Help us collaborate with other municipalities and the state to implement reforms.(102)

Come down with transforming power, Holy God

Holy God, who has promised to hear the petitions of those who, We pray you mercifully to incline your ear to us who have now made our prayers and supplications unto you; and grant that those things which we have asked faithfully according to your will, may be obtained effectually, to the relief of our necessity, and to the setting forth of your glory. *Amen.*