

Governor Romney:

reconciliation

ATLANTIC OCEAN
AFRICA
SOUTH AMERICA
DARAR TONGAN
SAFETY SOUTH AFRICA

Retracing The Journey of Slavery
United States – Caribbean – Brazil – West Africa – South Africa
May 30, 1998 – May 31, 1999

*The Interfaith Pilgrimage
Of The Middle Passage*

On May 30, 1998, walkers left the Nipponzan Myohoji Peace Pagoda in Leverett and traveled south on a year-long journey—a Pilgrimage that was a “living prayer of the heart, mind, and body for the sons and daughters of the African Diaspora.” Their statement of purpose continues:

take action!

Governor Mitt Romney has promised to bring back the death penalty, in spite of its proven racism. The Department of Justice has concluded that the Federal death penalty is used disproportionately against People of Color, who are more than twice as likely to end up on death row than whites. Write to Governor Romney and tell him what you think.

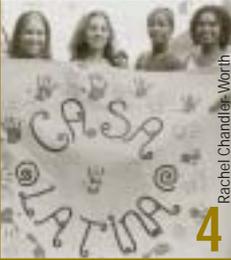
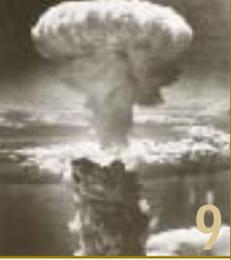
Photo by Leora Adams

“When we walk together, our feet touch the same earth, we walk beneath the same sun and soak the same rain. As we journey together with a common purpose, we realize that joys and difficulties can arise, but the difficulties need not stop us. In walking, we begin to restore the spiritual strength of humanity, the strength to reverse the vicious repercussions of our history and to move towards a genuinely peaceful society nourished by the innate generosity of human beings and the natural world.”

A a G u O g S u T s O t

☛ **Community organizing is 90% about human relationships. We must all work to heal old wounds and bridge differences in the name of building a broad-based social change movement. We are stronger if we can come together. Heal an old wound this month. Build a bridge.**

☛ **James Baldwin taught us that “nothing can be changed until it is faced.” This month, face and name your own and your community’s active or internalized prejudice and/or racism.**

DOMINGO	LUNES	MARTES	MIÉRCOLES	JUEVES	VIERNES	SÀBADO
Lughnassad-Lammas (Wiccan). Celebration to mark the beginning of the harvest. 1	<i>“Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced.”</i> —James Baldwin (1924–1987), author, activist, educator. In 1983, Baldwin became Five College professor in the Afro-American Studies Department of UMass, Amherst. 2	<i>“In looking at history, ... there have always been people who have had the courage to stand against the injustice of defining and judging other human beings based solely on race.”</i> —Brenda López, Springfield activist, advocate for women 3	 Rachel Chandler-Worth 4	For the last two years, supporters of Casa Latina have held an August Camina Para Casa (left), a fundraising walk for Casa Latina. Casa Latina promotes Latino empowerment and cultural pride by providing services, education and facilitating social change. Information: Eneida or Lillian, 413.586.1569 5	(1945) A U.S. B-29 bomber drops an atomic bomb in the center of the port city of Hiroshima, Japan. Nearly 100,000 die instantly. As of August 6, 2003, Hiroshima city officials estimate that a total of 231,920 people have died from the bombing and the after-effects of radiation exposure. 6	<i>“Let all souls here rest in peace; for we shall not repeat the evil.”</i> —inscription at the Hiroshima Peace Park 7
Three days later, on August 9, 1945, another U.S. B-29 bomber drops an atomic bomb on Nagasaki killing more than 40,000 children, women and men instantly. Tens of thousands more die in the following weeks and years. 8	 9	On December 31, 2002 as part of First Night for Peace sponsored by The Roundtables for Nonviolence at First Churches Northampton and AFSC, Western Massachusetts community members folded peace cranes. On August 6, 2003, the cranes and accompanying notes from Northampton Mayor Mary Clare Higgins and from the children of Western Massachusetts to the children of Hiroshima, were mailed to the Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba of Hiroshima to be hung at the statue of Sadako in the Hiroshima Peace Park. 10	(1995) Thousands demonstrate in support of Mumia Abu Jamal (on death row in Philadelphia since 1982), journalist and former Black Panther.  11	The two places in this country with the highest concentration of People of Color—the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico—have elected representatives in Congress who have no voting power. 12	(during 1893) The independent kingdom of Hawaii is overthrown by the U.S. Navy and colonized. In 1993, the U.S. apologizes to the Kanake Maoli people for the armed invasion. 13	14
<i>“Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison.”</i> —Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862), Massachusetts philosopher and writer jailed for protesting the U.S. invasion of Mexico, August 14, 1846 15	In fiscal year 2004, Massachusetts will spend more money on prisons and jails (\$830 million), than it will on its 29 state university and college campuses (\$816 million). By 2001, 5.6 million Americans were either in prison or had served prison time. 16	There are many local groups tackling prison issues. The Springfield Harm Reduction Coalition is working to prevent the building of a new women’s jail in Chicopee. Info: Holly, 413.348.8234 Community member Lois Ahrens has started the Real Cost of Prison project. Information: www.realcostofprisons.org 17	<i>“Forgiveness and reconciliation are not cheap, they are costly. ... Forgiveness is an act of much hope and not despair. It is to hope in the essential goodness of people and to have faith in their potential to change. It is to bet on that possibility. ... Ultimately there is no future without forgiveness.”</i> —Desmond Tutu, (1931), Nobel Laureate, chairperson of the South African Truth and Reconciliation commission 18	(During 1897) Home rule established in Puerto Rico (During 1898) U.S. defeats Spain and “takes” Puerto Rico 19	<i>“We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people.”</i> —Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. 21	20
 22	(1927) Noted labor activists, anarchists, and Italian immigrants Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti are executed in Massachusetts for robbery and murder, despite illegal acts by police and prosecutors and world-wide protests. Years later, many believe they were innocent. Hampden County Citizens Against the Death Penalty hold an annual event, 5:30pm to 7:30pm. Information: 413.567.3451 mcadp1@aol.com. 23	(1967) Secret memo exposes FBI’s COINTELPRO’s purpose “to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize” civil rights groups. 24	In 2003, the <i>New York Times</i> reports that the FBI is scrutinizing anti-war rallies: “The Federal Bureau of Investigation has collected extensive information on the tactics, training and organization of antiwar demonstrators....” 25	<i>“...the situation of oppression is a dehumanized and dehumanizing totality affecting both the oppressors and those whom they oppress.”</i> —Paulo Freire (1922–1997), Brazilian activist-educator, author of <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> 27	Springfield Vietnamese Civic Association Moon Festival, with lantern procession and dragon dance. Information: 413.733.9373 28	26
 29	(1955) Emmett Till, a Black teenager, is brutally murdered in Mississippi for allegedly whistling at a white woman. Till’s mutilated body is displayed in an open casket funeral by his mother, who courageously resists pressure to be silent. Her words “I want all the world to know” stimulates protests throughout the country. 30	Getting sensitive to language Sometimes we define and label people based on large geographic areas at the expense of understanding and acknowledging the diversity of cultures included within these labels. It is important to remember and acknowledge the plurality of language, history, and culture that exists within these areas. For instance, when we use the term “Asian” to refer to anyone whose ethnic roots are in Asia, we disregard the vast diversity among the many cultures in that region. Similarly, Africa is a continent, not a country. Nor is it a single culture. To discuss “Africans” or “African cultures” as if these are homogeneous does a disservice to the rich variations in Africa and in the African Diaspora. 31				

