



**We are  
Called**

**TO HEAL. TO UNITE. TO JUSTICE.**

## Team Reflections – Huddle

### **No. 11 Cultural Competency & Humility**

Cultural competency is a vital aspect of a health equity strategy. Disparities exist in part because we don't always know and understand one another very well. Real deep learning entails a willing spirit, or what could be called cultural humility, which views those who are different from us as teachers. They are the experts who can teach us what they need, what's important to them and what human flourishing looks like for them.

Sister Thea Bowman was a Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration with unparalleled charisma. She drew inspiration from Jesus, her African American roots and the music of her culture. [11.1] She spoke of her tradition, saying, "Black sacred song has been at once a source and an expression of Black faith, spirituality and devotion. By song, our people have called the Spirit into our hearts, homes, churches and communities." [11.2] At the end of one such speech to the U.S. Bishops, Sister Thea had them standing and singing "We Shall Overcome!"

The next time you hear a black patient's family and loved ones singing or chanting to mourn, celebrate or comfort, know that it comes from a deep spiritual place. Perhaps consider joining them knowing that together, we shall overcome, someday.

#### **Consider**

Have you ever heard black families sing with a loved one in the hospital? Do you recall your reaction and feelings? Can you imagine what you might think if you heard music or rhythmic clapping and sound coming from a hospital room?

#### **Let us pray together,**

*No storm can shake my inmost calm  
While to that Rock I'm clinging.  
Since Love is lord of heav'n and earth,  
How can I keep from singing?*

Robert Lowery, Hymn, "How Can I Keep from Singing"

[11.1] Thea Bowman, "The Gift of African American Sacred Song" in *Lead Me, Guide Me: The African American Catholic Hymnal* (G.I.A. Publications: 1987).