Memorandum of Understanding

Whereas, since April 16, 2016, more than ten thousand Descendants of the 272 enslaved men, women and children, living and deceased, have been identified; and a majority have since organized into a GU272 Descendant Association, and

Whereas, on September 21, 2016, the Maryland Provincial and the President of Georgetown University agreed to begin a series of meetings to define our way forward-beginning with the Descendants’ proposal to establish a GU272 Foundation, and

Whereas, on April 17, 2017, in Washington D. C., before a gathering of GU272 Descendants, the President of the Jesuit Conference of the United States and Canada, publicly confessed to Descendants for its sin against God and betrayal of the dignity of our ancestors, and

Whereas, on May 5, 2017, a Leadership group of GU272 Descendants formally petitioned Superior General, Arturo Sosa to send Jesuit Visitors to the United States to take actions to mitigate the lingering impact of slavery, and

Whereas, on June 20, 2017, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus has written that, “Jesuit slaveholding in the United States and in particular, the sale of 272 slaves from the Jesuit Estates in Southern Maryland to purchasers in Louisiana, were a sin against God and a betrayal of the human dignity of your ancestors. I have great concern for this tragic history and its continuing legacy nearly two centuries later”, and

Whereas, in March of 2018, one leader each representing GU272 Descendants, the Society of Jesus and Georgetown met with the President of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and requested that the Foundation engage our work as a neutral convener/facilitator, and

Whereas, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, using its Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation process has now facilitated, a two-day descendants convening, a two-day Jesuit convening, two combined convening of Descendants, Jesuits and Georgetown, and two separate one-day lead committee meetings, and

Whereas, the process of TRHT has led us to internalize a greater common good, on June 2, 2019, all U.S. Provincials and the President of the U.S. and Canada Jesuit Conference communicated in writing their desire to work with GU272 Descendants in creating a GU272 Foundation with a noble mission
and objectives to create a pathway forward to atonement, mitigation, transformation and reconciliation; to pursue a greater common good within God’s One Human family.

Therefore, the Society of Jesus and the GU272 Descendants Association herein memorialize our commitment to establish an irrevocable trust to accelerate the advancement of truth, racial healing, and transformation, and through a focus on educational advancement and other support, to uplift future generations of Descendants.

Our vision includes a meaningful financial investment of $1 billion to capitalize this Trust, with the Society of Jesus providing a significant initial contribution.

We commit to developing a plan to achieve this goal, as well as developing the specific strategies necessary to establish the foundation.

Very Rev. John Cecero, S.J.
Provincial, U.S. Northeast Province

Very Rev. Ronald Mercier, S.J.
Provincial, U.S. Central and Southern Province

Very Rev. Robert Hussey, S.J.
Provincial, Maryland Province

Very Rev. Brian Paulson, S.J.
Provincial, U.S Midwest Province

Mrs. Cheryllyn Branche, President
GU272 Descendant Association
Co-Chair, Foundation Leadership Committee

Mr. Earl Williams Sr., Co-Chair
GU272 Foundation Leadership Committee

Very Rev. Scott Santa María, S.J.
Provincial, U.S. West Province

Mr. Joseph M. Stewart, Chair
GU272 Foundation Leadership Committee
Very Rev. Timothy Kesicki, S. J. President
Jesuit Conference U.S. and Canada

Joseph Scantlebury, Facilitator
Vice President, Program Strategy
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Entered into by the GU272 Descendants Association and U.S. Society of Jesus

September 20, 2019