

Racial Justice Sunday

12th February 2017

"Each person is precious; persons are more important than things, and the worth of an institution is measured by the way it treats the life and dignity of human beings...."



Pope Francis' message for the 103rd World Day of Migrants and Refugees
15 January 2017



Racial Justice Sunday 2017

Our Community

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Racial Justice Sunday –12th February 2017

We wish to raise awareness of the responsibility of the Catholic Church to eradicate racial discrimination in all its forms within the church and wider society. We call upon all Catholics – lay, religious and ordained to promote and celebrate our communities wherever we worship, work and live. Racial justice is a gospel imperative since Christ called us not just to welcome all who we meet but to treat people with dignity and respect in every aspect of our private and public lives.

We have produced these resources to help promote this fundamental transformation in our society on the theme of *Our Community*.

As it says in our Gospel reading from Matthew 5:24 for this day - we must first be reconciled to our brothers and sisters.

Please join us in celebrating *Our Community*. It's time to end this evil that has no place in our hearts or in our homes, parishes and schools; in our shops, work, travel and leisure times.



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CARJ Prayer for Racial Justice

Father, you created each one of us in your own image.

Yet yours is a world made glorious by its rich diversity. This we sometimes misunderstand, sometimes fear.

Give us the patience to build on what unites us, to celebrate our differences and to learn from them.

Grant us the wisdom to recognise your Church, beyond the walls of a building, reaching out across all communities, countries and cultures.

Give us the courage to offer refuge to those in need, to challenge prejudice and seek justice for all.

Help us see that you created us in your image. Neighbour or stranger, always our brother or sister.

Amen



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Scriptural reflection

Matthew 5: 17-37, Ecclesiasticus 15, 1 Corinthians 2

In Christian discussions, we often hear the term 'Gospel' opposed favourably to the term 'law', tending to mean Jewish law. Throughout his letters, St Paul insists that true human goodness comes not from conformity to any written code however binding, but from the graced following of Jesus Christ. With amazing daring for a Jewish teacher, Jesus claims authority over law, as in the repeated formula. 'It was said. . . 'but I say to you'.

The term 'Jewish law' is itself complex. On the one hand, it refers to the precise written codes we find in certain biblical books (Leviticus, Numbers, etc) governing just about every realm of human life: food, sexuality, inheritance, and the relationships between members of the twelve tribes and 'strangers' or foreigners. For Jesus, not one letter, not one stroke of this law will be changed.

On the other hand stands the profound Jewish sense of Torah - the divine revelation about the nature of the authentic good of the peoples of the Covenant. This is not a mere code but a gift, and virtue must go deeper than conformity. So Jesus reaches beyond the realm of observable behaviour to that of our deepest attitudes and values (which written law cannot directly touch).



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Ecclesiasticus tells us, surprisingly, 'If you wish, you can keep the commandments, to behave faithfully is within your power'. That assumption — on which all law codes are based — is far from the experience of St. Paul in Romans. 'The good I wanted to do I could not do; the evil I wanted to avoid, I found myself doing. Who will free me from this body of sin?' Not the Law, he answers, nor his own will-power, but the merciful grace of Christ. 'All have sinned' - so all need the mercy of God, and all are called to be merciful to others.

Countless sins against justice are rooted in the indeterminate human capacity for blindness and bias, for the exclusive valuing of our own rights (and usually our own privileges) over against the rights of others, denying them respect, and social participation. So, for example, the belief that distinctive human characteristics derive from race is age-old and endemic. A transposition of this belief into the assumption of one's own race's superiority over others follows easily, especially perhaps to a society with an imperial history. We can, however, grow in painful awareness of these deep-rooted patterns of thought and practice, both individual and cultural. The word 'racism' in English was not first used till 1936, and it was said of a mid-twentieth-century moral theologian that he had the distinction of inventing a 'new sin', that of racism. Linguistic clarity permits further reflection, including self-examination.



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Following the deep insight of Paul, we may realise that successive attempts to encode awareness in law are both vital and never enough. By confessing our sin, we bring this destructive mode of belief and practice before God, both to reflect on some of our most deeply rooted attitudes and to seek the graced power of God in transforming and healing them.

Frank Turner SJ



*International Mass with Ethnic Chaplaincies in Westminster Cathedral
Mazur/catholicnews.org.uk*



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Bidding prayers

Let us pray for our church leaders: the Holy Father, Cardinals, Bishops and priests as they continue to build the community of God here on earth, that the Lord God will strengthen them and that through their sacrifices and encouragement, the people of God will come to live in peace and harmony.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Let us pray for all organisations and individuals dedicated to bringing about racial harmony in our workplaces, parishes, communities and in our world; that they will be diligent in their duties and courageous in the face of the challenges and experiences they encounter in their work.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Let us pray for ourselves for the courage to speak out in communities where racial tensions persist; that the Lord will help us to support the work of Racial Justice through our prayers, time, skills, talents and resources.

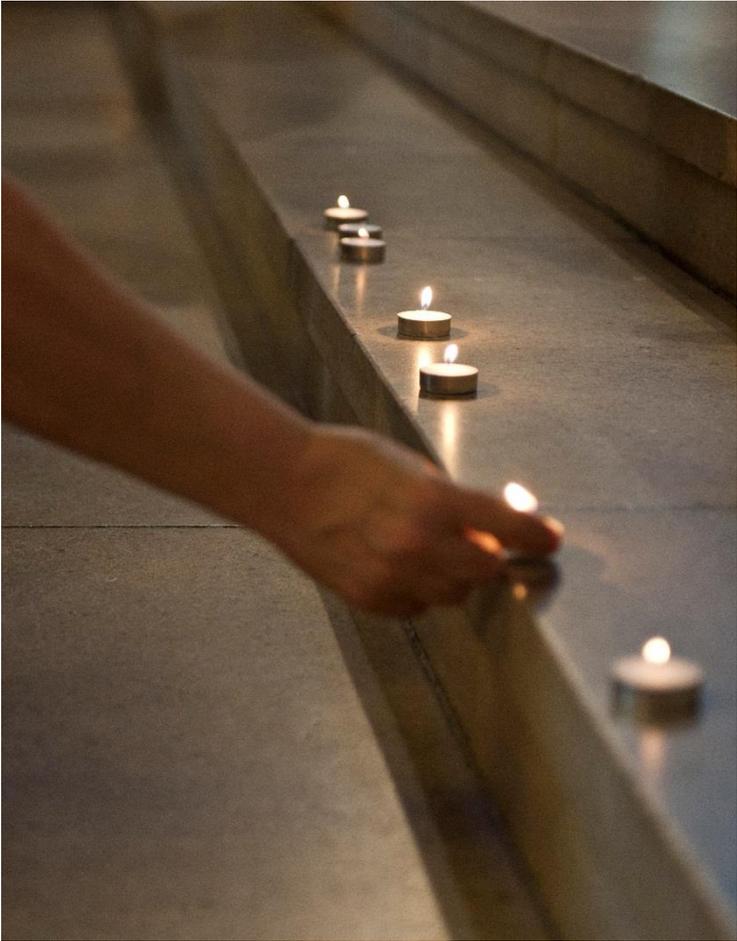
Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer



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Let us pray for all those who are discriminated in our society; that they may be recognised, treated and appreciated as children of God and that the Lord will give all the hearts of compassion to embrace all people with love and acceptance people from other races and cultures as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray for the Church of Christ throughout the world remembering especially Syria, Iraq, Iran Nigeria and other places where Christians are persecuted and communities divided; that the prayer of Christ; “that they may be one” may begin to find root in the life of all.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We prayer for people of war-torn nations remembering Syria and other countries divided by war, where the common good is trampled down by those who seek to assert their own power, that the Lord will bring to an end the experience of wars in such countries and that the people may begin to build their life and community in peace and harmony.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer



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We pray for all those whose hearts are broken and are crushed in spirit because of their experience racial discrimination in our communities and the wider society; that the Lord through the instrumentality of church, they will experience the love of God again in our Christian community.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray that vulnerable migrant children, who are forced to live far from their homes and are separated from their families, will find in our communities welcome, safety, inclusion and hope for a better future.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray for those in authority, that they may use their position to serve the people well and build a community where injustice and division will give way to justice, peace freedom and love.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer



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Suggested Hymns

BE NOT AFRAID

You shall cross the barren desert
but you shall not die of thirst
you shall wander far in safety
though you do not know the way
You shall speak your words in foreign lands
and all will understand
You shall see the face of God and live

Chorus

*Be not afraid
I go before you always
Come follow me
And I will give you rest*

If you pass through raging waters
in the sea you shall not drown
If you walk amid the burning flames
you shall not be harmed
If you stand before the power of hell



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and death is at your side
know that I am with you through it all

Blessed are your poor
for the kingdom shall be theirs
Blest are you that weep and mourn
for one day you shall laugh
And if wicked men insult and hate you
all because of me
blessed, blessed are you!

Robert Dufford



*Pilgrims at the opening mass for World Youth Day 2016
Mazur/catholicnews.org.uk*



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THIS IS MY BODY

This is my body, broken for you,
bringing you wholeness,
making you free, take it and eat it,
and when you do,
do it in love for me.

This is my blood poured out for you,
bringing forgiveness, making you free.
Take it and drink it, and when you do,
do it in love for me.

Back to my Father soon shall I go.
Do not forget me; then you will see
I am still with you, and you will know
you're very close to me.

Filled with my Spirit, how you will grow!
You are my branches; I am the tree.
If you are faithful, others will know
you are alive in me.



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Love one another – I have loved you,
and I have shown you how to be free;
serve one another, and when you do,
do it in love for me.

Sir Jude Nnam



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ONE BREAD ONE BODY

Chorus

*One bread, one body,
one Lord of all,
one cup of blessing which we bless.
And we, though many,
throughout the earth,
we are one body in this one Lord.*

Gentile or Jew,
servant or free,
woman or man, no more.

Many the gifts,
many the works,
one in the Lord of all.

Grain for the fields,
scattered and grown,
gathered to one, for all.

Fr John Foley, SJ



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WHATSOEVER YOU DO TO THE LEAST OF YOUR BROTHERS

Chorus

Whatsoever you do to the least of your brothers,

That you do unto me!

Whatsoever you do to the least of your Sisters,

That you do unto me!

When I was hungry you gave me to eat

When I was thirsty you gave me to drink.

Now enter into the home of your father.

When I was tired you helped me find rest.

When I was worried you calmed all my fears.

Now enter into the home of your Father.

When I was lonely, to me you did speak.

When I was troubled you listened to me.

Now enter into the home of your Father.



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When I was homeless you opened the door
When I was naked you gave me your coat,
Now enter into the home of your Father.
When I was laughed at, you stood by my side.
When I was happy, you shared my joy.
Now enter into the home of your Father.

Fr Willard Francis Jabusch



*Unaccompanied minors at a refugee camp in Greece
CNS photo/Stoyan Nenov, Reuters*



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BIND US TOGETHER

Chorus

Bind us together Lord,

bind us together with cords that cannot be broken.

Bind us together Lord,

bind us together Lord, bind us together in love.

There is only one God, there is only one King.

There is only one body, that is why we sing!

Fit for the family of God, purchased by His precious Blood.

Born with the right to be free: Jesus the victory has won.

We are the family of God, we are His promise divine,

we are His chosen desire, we are the glorious new wine.

Bob Gillman



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Poems

We all must bring our
Racism to end.
A message to all, I long to send.
The colours of the world,
All join as one.
For the Lord is our shepherd,
And we as his son.
Christ made all man in the
Likes of him.
So please let us all, "End Racism".

Robert M Hensel



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Our Community

Rally

Against

Casual commonplace

Incidents of

Abuse and assault

Let us...

Join

Urgently unite

Strengthen ourselves

Through genuine

Interconnectedness...

Calling out for

Empowerment and equality for all

Nicole-Rachelle Moore



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