

A SIMPLE LITURGY CHALLENGING RACISM

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Introduction

Leader: Racism is a sin against God and against our fellow human beings. It is contrary to the justice and the love of God. It destroys the human dignity of both the racist and the victim. Let us condemn racism in all its forms.

Scripture Reading: Mark 7: 24-30

Scripture Reflection

Voice 1: Rereads Mark 7:24

Voice 2: Jesus moves from his country to a foreign land, from his comfort zone to a place outside his ethnic security.

Spoken response: *Lift us beyond the burdens of pain and guilt.*

Voice 1: Rereads Mark 7:25-26

Voice 2: Jesus does not want to get involved. He tries to keep a low profile but is confronted by a stranger pleading for his help: someone of a different nationality, a different ethnic origin, a different religion. A woman.

Spoken response: *Build our memories into life-giving resolutions.*

Voice 1: Rereads Mark 7:27

Voice 2: Jesus answers her harshly.

Voice 3: I am from a different ethnicity, a different cultural background. I have to look after my own.

Voice 2: Why does Jesus respond like this? Is he leading the woman? What does he expect her to say?

Spoken response: *Give us the vision of a new creation.*

Voice 1: Rereads Mark 7:28

Voice 2: The woman responds courageously.

Voice 4: I may be a different religion, a different ethnicity, a different colour, a different gender, a different culture, but I have rights also. I am entitled to something. At least give me the crumbs.

Spoken response: *Strengthen us to act for justice and human dignity.*

Voice 1: Rereads Mark 7:29-30

Worship Resources

Voice 2: She has risen to Jesus' challenge. Now he treats her as an equal and gives her more than she had dared to hope.

Voice 3: Your daughter is healed: fully, completely now. I do not give you the crumbs. I give you the whole banquet. For you too are a child of God.

Spoken response: *And set all free.*

Prayer for God's help and healing

Leader: Redeeming God, in a world of violence we acknowledge our own selfishness and prejudice, which are contrary to your all-embracing love. Help us to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with Christ, in respect for all your children.

All: *WE PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS AND REDEMPTION; WE PRAY FOR HELP AND HEALING.*

Leader: Gracious God, mindful of our own need for your forgiveness and grace, enable us to be challenging yet compassionate towards those who show bigotry and commit racist violence. May their hatred and prejudice be overcome through the strength and liberation of your redeeming love.

All: *WE PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS AND REDEMPTION; WE PRAY FOR HELP AND HEALING.*

Leader: Caring God, your Son Jesus showed solidarity with the weak and vulnerable. Touch with your love all those who have been the victims of racist violence. Heal their wounds of body, mind and spirit and lead them on the journey to justice and reparation.

All: *WE PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS AND REDEMPTION; WE PRAY FOR HELP AND HEALING.*

Leader: Liberating God, you offer freedom to all people. Send your Holy Spirit to strengthen the victims of racist bullying, threats, persecution, and abuse. Break the bonds of fear and isolation, and empower us in our struggle.

All: *WE PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS AND REDEMPTION; WE PRAY FOR HELP AND HEALING.*

Leader: Reconciling God, help us to overcome all our ethnic divisions. Increase our understanding of how to develop a truly inclusive culture. Most of all, this day and every day, challenge us to challenge racism.

All: *AMEN.*

Closing responses

Worship Resources

Leader: God of justice, give us voice, take away our fear; shake up our prejudices and move us to a different place, so that we may stand on common ground with those who struggle for justice.

All: *TEACH US LOVE. TEACH US COMPASSION. ABOVE ALL, OUT OF LOVE AND COMPASSION, TEACH US TO ACT.AMEN.*

Sung blessing: "The peace of the Earth be with you" (Common Ground)