

# FAITH CONFRONTING RACISM

## PRAYER RESOURCES

*“May the Lord of Peace grant our nation the peace, the healing and the reconciliation that we seek. (cf. 2 Th. 3.16)” (SACBC Pastoral letter on racism).*

### A SAMPLE OF OPENING AND CLOSING PRAYERS

When you conduct discussions on racism and inequality, you can use the prayers below to open or close your sessions.

#### **Prayer no. 1: Written by the Pax Christi Anti-Racism Team.**

Dear God, in our efforts to dismantle racism, we understand that we struggle not merely against flesh and blood but against powers and principalities – those institutions and systems that keep racism alive by perpetuating the lie that some members of the family are inferior and others superior.

Create in us a new mind and heart that will enable us to see brothers and sisters in the faces of those divided by racial categories.

Give us the grace and strength to rid ourselves of racial stereotypes that oppress some of us while providing entitlements to others.

Help us to create a Church and nation that embraces the hopes and fears of people of all races.

Heal your family God, and make us one with you, in union with our brother Jesus, and empowered by your Holy Spirit. Amen.

#### **Prayer no. 2: *Prayer of Mother Theresa***

O God, we pray for all those in our world who are suffering from injustice:

For those who are discriminated against because of their race, color or religion;

For those imprisoned

for working for the relief of oppression;

For those who are hounded

for speaking the inconvenient truth;

For those tempted to violence

as a cry against overwhelming hardship;

For those deprived of reasonable health and education;

For those suffering from hunger and famine;

For those too weak to help themselves. Amen.

### **Prayer no. 3: *Prayer of St. Francis***

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy;  
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

## **EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE BEFORE THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**

When you celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation on the theme of healing racism, you can use the questions below for the examination of conscience:

This day we gather in the love of God and neighbour to examine patterns of racism in our hearts. We seek repentance and beg for forgiveness as we open our hearts to receive God's mercy.

### **Recommended Bible readings**

- 1 Corinthians 12:4-11: Although we are different from one another (in terms of race, ethnicity and nationality), we are one body of Christ.
- John 17:11.23: The disciples were people from different social, economic and political backgrounds. There were conflicts and differences among them. Our Lord prays that all may be one.
- Luke 10:25-37. In the midst of accusation of racism and reverse racism, it is tempting for each racial group to believe that it is a victim in South Africa. Each racial group therefore seeks vengeance and justice, and not compassion and reconciliation. When we encounter God's mercy in a deeper way, we shall begin to ask ourselves as a nation: What needs to happen in our nation so that my racial group moves from a position of demanding justice to a position of offering compassion and reconciliation, like the good Samaritan? There is a time for everything. In our country, what kind of time is this in God's eyes? Is it still a time for mistrust and justice? Or is it time to reach out to one another in compassion and reconciliation?
- John 15:9-17: Love one another.
- 1 John 3:11-18: Love is not mere words.
- 1 John 4: 7-21: If we love God, we must our neighbours, including those different from us in terms of race, ethnicity and nationality.
- Acts 10:1-43: God has no preference in terms of race, ethnicity and nationality. There is no partiality with God.

## Questions for the examination of conscience

When we grow in friendship with people who are different from us, we grow in our friendship with God. We reflect the perfection of God's love for all humanity. For our love for neighbours should be as perfect as God's love for all humanity. **"Be perfect, therefore, as your Heavenly Father is perfect"** Matthew 5:48.

*"In loving only those who share our racial and ethnic backgrounds, we fall short of fulfilling the demands of love which the Gospel calls for. The words of our Lord challenge us that if we greet only our brothers and sisters, **'what more are you doing than others? Do not even the non-believers do the same?'**" (Matthew 5: 47) (SACBC pastoral letter on racism).*

Have I hurt others through:

- Racist comments and racist jokes;
- Racial prejudice;
- Negative stereotyping of a people of different race/ethnic group/nationality
- Treating people of a different race/ethnic group/nationality as outsiders and outcasts;
- Being involved in violence against people of a different race/ethnic group/nationality;
- Ridiculing, gossiping and talking bad things about a person because he or she belongs to a different race/ethnic group/nationality.
- Failing to make friends with people who are from a different race/ethnic group/nationality.

Am I willing to apologize and make amends?

Am I willing to forgive people who have hurt me and members of my family through:

- Racist comments and racist jokes;
- Racial prejudice;
- Negative stereotyping of a people of my race/ethnic group/nationality
- Treating people of my race/ethnic group/nationality as outsiders and outcasts;
- Unleashing violence against people of my race/ethnic group/nationality;
- Ridiculing, gossiping and talking bad things about me because I belong to a different race/ethnic group/nationality.

Am I willing to ask for God's forgiveness for failing to recognize and thank God for diversity in humanity?

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