

DISMANTLING RACISM

AND IN HIS NAME
ALL OPPRESSION
SHALL CEASE

A COUNCIL OF BISHOPS ADVENT 2021 PROJECT

As you prepare to lead your conference this Advent season, prayerfully consider incorporating this theme into your preaching and teaching and adapting any of the following elements for use in your context.

THEME-RELATED SONG: O Holy Night, verse 3

Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is Love and His gospel is Peace;
Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother,
And in his name all oppression shall cease,
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful Chorus raise we;
Let all within us praise his Holy name!

FOCAL SCRIPTURES: Advent Year C – The Book of Luke

Luke 21:25-36 – “We Watch”

- **IDEA**
Where are the signs of oppression in our midst that serve as divine invitations for us to “wake up” (verse 35, The Message) to God’s calls for justice and peacemaking made real in the coming of the infant Jesus?
- **PRAYER FOCUS**
Pray for healing the destructive divisions that separate members of the human family and the body of Christ – racism, sexism, tribalism, ethnic conflict, xenophobia.
- **ACTIONS**
Encourage actions of bearing witness to the harm and pain in our midst and refraining from engaging in divisive rhetoric.

Luke 3:1-6 – “We Prepare”

- **IDEA**
When we resist racism and champion equity, we are preparing the way of the Lord (and the way of peace, love and justice).
- **PRAYER FOCUS**
Pray for the prophetic witness of the church and for its leaders. Pray that in the face of racial, tribal and ethnic oppression, we will have the courage to be voices crying in the wilderness.
- **ACTIONS**
Encourage churches to bear prophetic witness, finding ways to join the work of anti-racism, anti-discrimination and anti-xenophobia in their community.

Luke 3:7-18 – “We Act”

- **IDEA**

“Bear fruits worthy of repentance.” (verse 8a) In anticipation of the coming of Christ, we are not passive disciples, rather, we act in boldness as if Christ is already among us for, in fact, he is not only among us, he is in us. Our committed action in dismantling racism is a testament to our recognition of this fact.

- **PRAYER FOCUS**

Pray for protection and encouragement for those who have been “voices in the wilderness,” speaking and acting against racism. Offer prayers of inspiration and courage for those who wish to do more, that they may lead and take action. Offer prayers of transformation for those who continue to support and/or perpetuate racism, tribalism or xenophobia in any way.

- **ACTIONS**

Encourage disciples to actively support, promote and serve with organizations and efforts that address racial disparities in education, immigration, criminal justice, etc.

Luke 1:39- 45, (46-55) “We Rejoice”

- **IDEA**

While the promise of an end to racism and all forms of oppression may seem like a hoped-for but not-yet-realized promise (like an embryo in the womb, waiting to be born), we rejoice in the promises of God whose heart for the marginalized, excluded, violated and forgotten instructs us in the ways of justice and peace.

- **PRAYER FOCUS**

Offer prayers of thanksgiving for the gifts that come from those who have been marginalized. Offer prayers of commitment to be midwives of peace and justice so that safety, opportunity and freedom may be available to ALL people.

- **ACTIONS**

Encourage acts of celebration for the good things that are happening, for the places where people are working together for change, and for the people who are making a difference.

Prayer

God who incarnates, we your people stand in anticipation of your arrival amongst us in this Advent season. In the birth of your son Jesus, we are reminded of the power of the Word made flesh to bring peace, love and justice to all creation. Make your word come alive in us, Holy God. Prepare our hearts to see all of humanity as you do. Open our minds to listen and learn from one another. Convict our spirits to do the work needed to tear down all systems of fear, prejudice, exclusion and oppression. We pray for the vulnerable, the hurting and the marginalized, that they experience peace, safety, belonging and justice, and we pray that you will use us to make these virtues real upon the earth. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

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RACISM**

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