



# A TOOLKIT FOR ANTI-RACISM PRAYER SERVICES

*This is a resource toolkit that can be used by parishes/schools to create a prayerful response to foster racial and ethnic sensitivity.*



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## CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING PRINCIPLE: DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

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*- From Education for Justice*

### WHAT DOES THE CHURCH SAY ABOUT HUMAN DIGNITY?

Human Dignity originates from God and is of God because we are made in God's own image and likeness (GN 1:26-27). Human life is sacred because the human person is the most central and clearest reflection of God among us. Human beings have transcendent worth and value that comes from God; this dignity is not based on any human quality, legal mandate, or individual merit or accomplishment. Human dignity is inalienable - that means it is an essential part of every human being and is an intrinsic quality that can never be separated from other essential aspects of the human person

Human beings are qualitatively different from any other living beings in the world because they are capable of knowing and loving God, unlike any other creature. Belief in the dignity of the person is the foundation of morality. The principle of human dignity is the foundation of all the Catholic social teaching principles.

Where does this teaching on Human Dignity come from?

- **Biblical source:** Scripture— rooted in scripture
- **Moral source:** Tradition— the use of reason and reflection based in the Catholic tradition.
- **Ecclesial source:** Church teaching— expressed in the Popes' Encyclical letters, Apostolic letters, Synod documents, Apostolic exhortations, and the bishops' Pastoral letters, which respond to the issues of the day.



## WHAT DOES THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH SAY ABOUT HUMAN DIGNITY?

*The following are direct citations from the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Paragraph references precede each passage.*

- #1700** The dignity of the human person is rooted in his/her creation in the image and likeness of God. It is fulfilled in his/her vocation to divine beatitude. It is essential to a human being freely to direct him/herself to this fulfillment. By his/her deliberate actions, the human person does, or does not, conform to the good promised by God and attested by moral conscience. Human beings make their own contributions to their interior growth; they make their whole sentient and spiritual lives into means of this growth.
- #356** Of all visible creatures only man is “able to know and love his creator.” He is “the only creature on earth that God has will for its own sake,” and he alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in God’s own life. It was for this end that he was created, and this is the fundamental reason for his dignity:
- #357** Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. And he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead.
- #362** The human person, created in the image of God, is a being at once corporeal and spiritual. The biblical account expresses this reality in symbolic LANGUAGE when it affirms that “then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. Man, whole and entire, is therefore willed by God.
- #1738** Freedom is exercised in relationships between human beings. Every human person, created in the image of God, has the natural right to be recognized as a free and responsible being. All owe to each other this duty of respect. The right to the exercise of freedom, especially in moral and religious matters, is an inalienable requirement of the dignity of the human person. This right must be recognized and protected by civil authority within the limits of the common good and public order.



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EXCERPTS FROM PAPAL AND BISHOP DOCUMENTS

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*“Human creation by God “in God’s own image” confers upon every human person an eminent dignity; it also postulates the fundamental equality of all human beings. For the Church, this equality, which is rooted in being, acquires the dimension of an altogether special brotherhood and sisterhood through the Incarnation of the Son of God... In the Redemption effected by Jesus Christ the Church sees a further basis of the rights and duties of the human person. Hence every form of discrimination based on race... is absolutely unacceptable.”*

- POPE JOHN PAUL II  
to the UN Special Committee against Apartheid,  
July 7, 1984

*“We are heirs of a religious teaching which proclaims that all men and women, children of God, are brothers and sisters. Every form of discrimination against individuals and groups- whether because of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, economic status, or national or cultural origin- is a serious injustice which has severely weakened our social fabric and deprived our country of the unique contributions of many of our citizens.”*

- Brothers and Sisters to Us,  
U.S. BISHOPS’ PASTORAL LETTER ON RACISM IN OUR DAY,  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops,  
January 1979

*“Holy Scripture and Catholic social teachings proclaim the dignity of the human person and enjoin us to reform the structures of our society that ignore and undermine this fundamental truth. We are called not only to a radical conversion of heart but to a transformation of socially sinful structures as well.”*

- Dwell in My Love,  
PASTORAL LETTER ON RACISM BY FRANCIS CARDINAL GEORGE,  
April 2001



## CONVERSION OF THE HEART BY THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF ILLINOIS

Conversion is the response to God's self-revelation as love. Infinite love calls us to a transformation of mind and heart, a turning away from sin and an embrace of God's way for us. Once converted, our eyes are opened; we see what is truly important. We become, with God's grace, free, responsible and holy.

Conversion changes individuals, and individuals change society. Overcoming the sin or racism begins by opening ourselves to God's Spirit who draws all to holiness. The Spirit makes each of us a member of the Body of Christ, and this spiritual relationship is the source of our hope for personal and social change. In Christ, we recognize racism as a division contrary to His will for His people, a division the Spirit will heal.

Any human society, if it is to be well-ordered and productive, must lay down as a foundation this principle, namely, that every human being is a person, that is, his/her nature is endowed with intelligence and free will. Indeed, precisely because s/he is a person, s/he has rights and obligations flowing directly and simultaneously from his/her very nature.

- Pope John XXIII,  
*Peace on Earth, #9*

The human person is the clearest reflection of God's presence in the world; all of the Church's work in pursuit of both justice and peace is designed to protect and promote the dignity of every person. For each person not only reflects God, but is the expression of God's creative work and the meaning of Christ's redemptive ministry.

- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops,  
*The Challenge of Peace, #15*

Life, especially human life, belongs to God; whoever attacks human life attacks God's very self.

- Pope John Paul II,  
*The Gospel of Life, #9*

Human Dignity can be realized and protected only in community.

-United States Conference of Catholic Bishops,  
*Economic Justice for All, #14*



**CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM, RACIAL  
DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE;  
PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, 2001**

**MAJOR AREAS OF CONCERN**

- **Racism**
- **Discrimination**
- **National  
Reconciliation**
- **Development**
- **Education**
- **Affirmative Action**
- **Freedom of  
Conscience**

**HISTORICAL NOTE**

The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace used the opportunity of a major world conference on racism held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001 to republish its 1998 document, *The Church and Racism*, and issue this corollary. The *Contribution* cites extensively a number of interventions and addresses by Pope John Paul II. The document places a special emphasis on actions the Pope had taken in the Jubilee Year of 2000 to request pardon for Church actions of omissions that may have contributed to racism and discrimination.

The *Contribution* begins by noting an increase in racism and discrimination in the thirteen years since the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace published the *church and Racism*. The *Contribution* emphasizes the importance of the Church's appeal for personal conversion, and the necessity of requesting and granting pardons for past actions. The document stresses the importance of education in combating racism and the teaching of values such as human dignity and unity in promoting solidarity and the common good. The *Contribution* concludes by highlighting the importance of freedom of conscience and religion.

**A. THE INCREASE IN RACISM**

1. With the acceleration of globalization and the escalation of ethnic violence, racism has increased since 1988 (#'s 1-4).
2. "It is right to rejoice at the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa" (#4).
3. "While law may have abolished slavery everywhere, the practice still persists, notably in Africa among people of different ethnic groups" (# 4).

**B. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S APPEAL FOR CONVERSION**

1. "The contribution of the Catholic Church, in its constant appeal for personal conversion, is most important and necessary" (#5).

(Continued on page 10)



*(Continued from page 9)*

2. “Christians in particular have the responsibility to offer a teaching that stresses the dignity of every human being and the unity of the human race” (# 5).
3. In the Jubilee Year of 2000, Pope John Paul II issued a solemn request for “pardon for past acts and omissions of the Church which may have encouraged and/or perpetuated discrimination against particular groups of people” (# 6).
4. After pardon is granted, “a ‘purification of memory’ then becomes necessary” (# 6).
5. “This occurs whenever it becomes possible to attribute to past historical deeds a different quality, having a new and different effect on the present, in view of the progress in reconciliation in truth, justice, and charity among human beings” (#6).
6. During the Jubilee Year, the Pope requested pardon for “faults committed in relations with the people of Israel... against the dignity of women... [from] the peoples of Africa for the slave trade... [and from] the American Indians and Africans deported as slaves” (# 7).

### **C. PARDON AND NATIONAL RECONCILIATION**

1. The Church “hopes that political leaders and people, especially those involved in tragic conflicts, fueled by hatred and the memory of often ancient wounds, will be guided by the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation exemplified by the Church.” (# 8).
2. Conditional amnesty and “truth and reconciliation commissions” can assist nations which have been “destroyed and divided by serious conflicts” to engage in reconciliation (# 8).
3. “The weight of history, with its litany of resentments, fears, suspicions between families, ethnic groups or populations must first be overcome” (# 9).
4. “Local Churches have an active role to play, notably through their messages of forgiveness and reconciliation” (# 10).
5. “All forms of mediation therefore should be encouraged” (#10).
6. “Forgiveness has its own demands: the evil which has been done must be acknowledged and, as far as possible, corrected” (#11).
7. The “primary demands” of forgiveness are respect for truth and justice (#10).

*(Continued on page 11)*



*(Continued from page 10)*

8. “The duty to make reparation must be fulfilled... reparation should erase all the consequences of the illicit action and restore things to the way they would most probably be” (# 12).
9. “The need for reparation reinforces the obligation of giving substantial help to developing countries, an obligation weighing chiefly on the more developed countries” (# 12).

#### **D. EDUCATION AGAINST RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION**

1. “The roots of racism, discrimination and intolerance are found in prejudice and ignorance, which are first of all the fruits of sin, but also of faulty and inadequate education” (#13).
2. “All people of whatever race, condition or age, in virtue of their dignity as human persons have an inalienable right to education” (# 13).
3. “Education is a matter of teaching the human being to become ‘ever more human,’ to ‘be more’ rather than to ‘have more’... to ‘be with others’ but even more to ‘be for others’” (#14).
4. Education should emphasize “certain major values such as the unity of the human race, the dignity of every human being, the solidarity which binds together all the members of the human family [and]... respect for human rights” (#15).
5. The media has a duty to promote “the common good” (#16).
6. Religions “must show that religious belief inspires peace, encourages solidarity, promotes justice and upholds liberty” (#17).

#### **E. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

1. “These voluntary measures are intended to ensure effective recognition of the equality of all, for example by facilitating access to bank loans for a particular category of the population” (#18).
2. “The choice of this kind of policy remains controversial. There is a real risk that such measures will crystallize differences rather than foster social cohesion” (#19).

*(Continued on page 12)*



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3. Affirmative action “must be temporary... ought not to have the effect of maintaining different rights for different groups and... must not be kept in force once their objectives have been achieved” (#19).

## **F. IMMIGRANTS, POVERTY AND DISCRIMINATION**

1. Everyone should “be generous in their welcome... and recognize that immigrants bring with them the riches of their culture, history and traditions” (# 20).
2. “The Local Churches... have not hesitated to enter into public debate in order to condemn racism and foster openness to immigrants” (# 20).
3. Since 1988, two great global divides have grown deeper: the first is the ever more tragic phenomenon of poverty and social discrimination and the other, more recent and less widely condemned, concerns the unborn child” (#21).
4. “Freedom of conscience and freedom of religion remain the premise, the principle and the foundation of every other freedom, human and civil, individual and communal “ (# 22).



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# PRAYERS



## **DWELL IN MY LOVE PRAYER**

**G**ood and gracious God we offer this prayer today  
in Love that unites us to you and  
to one another.

We pray that nourished by your word and by your Spirit,  
we may grow ever stronger in faith  
as we strive for the coming of your kingdom.

We stand at the crossroads committed  
to the ongoing faith-centered struggle  
to dismantle racism, to create just and  
anti-racist relationships with our brothers and sisters,  
and within our church and institutions as  
we strive to build a society that dwells together  
in God's unconditional and universal love.

**AMEN.**

Archdiocese of Chicago's  
Anti-Racism Implementation Team



## SPIRIT OF GOD

Spirit of God,

you are the breath of creation,  
the wind of change  
that blows through our lives,  
opening us up to new dreams and new hopes,  
new life in Jesus Christ.

Forgive us our closed minds  
which barricade themselves  
against new ideas,  
preferring the past  
to what you might want to do through us tomorrow.

Forgive our closed eyes  
which fail to see the needs of your world,  
blind to opportunities of service and love.

Forgive our closed hands  
which clutch our gifts and our wealth  
for our own use alone.

Forgive us our closed hearts  
which limit our affections to ourselves  
and our own.

Spirit of new life,  
forgive us and break down  
the prison walls of our selfishness,  
that we might be open to your love  
and open for the service of your world,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**AMEN.**



## JUSTICE AND PEACE

Good and gracious God

who loves and delights in all people,  
we stand in awe before You,  
knowing that the spark of life  
within each person on earth  
is the spark of your divine life.

Differences among cultures and races

are multicolored manifestations of Your light.

May our hearts and minds be open

to celebrate similarities and differences  
among our sisters and brothers.

We place our hopes for racial harmony in You,

Our loving God.

**AMEN**

Adapted from Joseph Stoutzenberger,  
*Justice & Peace*,  
Dubuque, Iowa: Brown-ROA, 2000



## PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come Holy Spirit, breathe down upon our troubled world.  
Shake the tied foundations of our crumbling institutions.  
Break the rules that keep you out of all our sacred spaces.  
And the dust and rubble, gather up the seedlings of a new creation.

Come Holy Spirit, enflame once more the dying embers of our weariness.  
Shake us out of our complacency.  
Whisper our names once more, and scatter your gifts of grace with wild abandon.

Break open the prisons of our inner being  
and let your raging justice be our sign of liberty.

Come Holy Spirit, and lead us to places we would rather not go;  
expand the horizons of our limited imaginations.  
Awaken in our souls dangerous dreams for a new tomorrow,  
and rekindle in our hearts the fire of prophetic enthusiasm.

Come Holy Spirit, whose justice outwits international conspiracy;  
whose light outshines spiritual bigotry,  
whose peace can overcome the destructive potential of warfare,  
whose promise invigorates our every effort  
to create a new Heaven and a new Earth,  
now and forever.

**AMEN.**

Diarmuid O'Murchu  
Special Prayers

<http://www.diarmuid13.com/SpecialPrayers>

accessed November 3, 2008



## FAVORITISM

**D**ear God, thanks for teaching us that favoritism is a sin, and that we are all one in union with Jesus Christ.  
Lord, grant us recognition that racism still exists in order that we'll be able to help end it.  
Helps us to know and to understand other races so that our hearts will accept them.  
We pray for a change of spirit in our families, churches, communities, and the world to accept diversity.  
May this help lead to world peace.

**AMEN.**

Source Unknown



## A WORLD YOUTH DAY PRAYER

**“N**o to selfishness;  
no to injustice;  
no to pleasure without moral rules;  
no to despair;  
no to hatred and violence;  
no to ways without God;  
no to irresponsibility and mediocrity.

**Y**es to God, to Jesus Christ and to the Church;  
yes to efforts to elevate people and to lead them to God;  
yes to justice, to love and to peace;  
yes to solidarity with everyone, especially with the most needy;  
yes to home;  
yes to your duty to build a better society.”

Pope John Paul II



## WALKING IN THE WAYS OF PEACE

**O** God, Lord of All Beings,  
Lord of peace in whose hand is all good;  
give us peace in our world and peace with out neighbors!  
All-merciful God, be gracious towards your servants  
who are engaged in the work of peace.  
Help them to achieve a just and durable peace  
in your Holy House, the land of peace.  
Help us to seek your good pleasure,  
Help us to love justice and  
to walk humbly with you in your ways,  
the ways of peace.

**AMEN.**

*Unknown*



## THE LORD'S PRAYER FOR THE REIGN OF JUSTICE

OUR GOD WHO IS IN HEAVEN\*

*And in all of us here on earth the hungry, the oppressed, the excluded  
Holy is your Name.*

**MAY YOUR REIGN COME**

MAY YOUR REIGN COME AND YOUR WILL BE DONE:

*In our choice to struggle with the complexities of this world, and to confront  
greed and the desire for power in ourselves, in our nation, and in the global community*

**MAY YOUR REIGN COME**

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD:

*Bread that we are called to share, bread that you have given us abundantly and that we must  
distribute fairly, ensuring security for all*

**MAY YOUR REIGN COME**

FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES:

*times we have turned away from the struggles of our brothers and sisters;  
times we have thought only of ourselves and of those who are like us*

**MAY YOUR REIGN COME**

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION:

*the temptation to close our minds, ears, and eyes to the unfair systems that encourage racism,  
and protect only the rights of the privileged;  
the temptation to think it is too difficult to bring about more just alternatives*

**MAY YOUR REIGN COME**

DELIVER US FROM EVIL:

*The evil of a world where violence happens in your name, where wealth for a few is  
more important than economic rights for all.*

*Where gates and barriers between people are so hard to bring down*

**MAY YOUR REIGN COME**

MAY YOUR REIGN COME, FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM, THE POWER AND THE GLORY  
FOREVER AND EVER. **AMEN!**

*\*Adapted from a prayer by the Center of Concern*



## THERE IS NO MIDDLE GROUND

If we choose to be on the side of the great Positive Power  
we have no choice but to set our hearts and minds  
against the destruction around us,  
but thought without action is useless.

We must be on one side or the other  
and how we will involve ourselves  
must be the free choice of everyone.

If we choose to act, we must act  
intelligently and with common sense.

It means we will do everything in our power  
to understand the question  
we choose to involve ourselves with.

But whatever we are,  
we must be action people.

Even if the only action possible is to pray.

*Arthur Solomon,  
Ojibway spiritual leader*



## FOR YOUTH

**M**ost Holy Lord God, when our children lose their way forgive us,  
the people to whom you have entrusted them,  
for not providing the guidance they need.

Lord open our eyes and help us to  
take and reclaim our responsibility to our youth.

Only you can lead the way to change.

Give us compassion, concern, care and love for others.

May your light shine through us into the darkness of this world  
so that our youth can see the way to you and  
to a more wholesome view of themselves and others.

In Christ's holy name we pray.

Amen.

*By Judy Keyes*



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## SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

SOURCE: DWELL IN MY LOVE, A PASTORAL LETTER ON RACISM  
BY FRANCIS CARDINAL GEORGE

### GOD, THE CREATOR

*Genesis*1: 26-27, 31

*God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them...and God saw everything that he had made, and it was very good...*

The book of Genesis reveals God as the Creator of a vast universe teeming with a rich diversity of plants and animals, surrounded by the sea and sky. The rising and setting of the sun and moon marks off the rhythm of creation's life. A God whose own being and goodness generated more being and goodness called creation into being separate from himself and yet intrinsically dependent upon him. United in the dynamics and mutual self-giving of their life as God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit create out of infinite love the universe and all that fills it. According to the book of Genesis, the culmination and high point of God's creative energy is the creation of the human race on the sixth day.

Though God intended that all creation live in the harmony and love that unites it as one, human beings, exercising their free will, defied the will of God and replaced the divinely planned harmony with division, the divinely willed unity with conflict, the divinely intended community with fragmentation. One form of human division, conflict and fragmentation is racism: personal, social, institutional and structural. Racism mars our identity as a people, as the human race made in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:27). The 1979 U.S. Bishops' pastoral on racism teaches that "racism is a sin: a sin that divides the human family, blots out the image of God among specific members of that family, and violates the fundamental human dignity of those called to be children of the same Father."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



## SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

**SOURCE: DWELL IN MY LOVE, A PASTORAL LETTER ON RACISM  
BY FRANCIS CARDINAL GEORGE**

### JESUS, THE LORD

#### *John 17:20-22*

*May they all be one as you, Father are in me and I in you. So also may they be one in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. The glory which you gave me I have given to them, that they may be one, as we are one; I in them and you in me, may they be perfectly one. Then the world will know that you sent me, and that you loved them as you loved me.*

Jesus, the incarnation of the eternal Son of God, entered human history two millennia ago. When Jesus came into the world, his people, God's people, the Jewish people, were a conquered people, often despised by their foreign rulers. Jesus gave us the means to find our way back to his Father, whom he taught us to call our Father. Jesus, the new Adam, went to his death on the sixth day to recreate us by redeeming us from sin and Satan. We are again to walk in unity, as one people enjoying the variety of plants, animals and human cultures, which constitute the world redeemed by Christ. Through his preaching and healing, through the pattern of discipleship he called people to follow, through his bodily resurrection from the dead, the Lord Jesus literally embodies for us a new way of life, which conforms to the will and reign of God. Jesus transcends, challenges and transforms everything that divides the human community (Gal. 3:28). He calls us back to a communion with one another, a unity, which reflects the communion of God's own Trinitarian life.

Racism, whether personal, social, institutional or structural, contradicts the purpose of the incarnation of the Word of God in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Racism contradicts God's will for our salvation. We cannot claim to love God without loving our neighbor (Mat.22: 34 ff.). Since racism is a failure to love our neighbor, only freedom from racism will enable us to be one with God and one another.<sup>5</sup>

(#4-5)

<sup>5</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, An Apostolic Exhortation to the bishops, priests and faithful of the entire Catholic Church on Evangelization in the Modern World, 9.



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## SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

**SOURCE: DWELL IN MY LOVE, A PASTORAL LETTER ON  
RACISM  
BY FRANCIS CARDINAL GEORGE**

### THE HOLY SPIRIT

*John 15:26-27*

*When the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father — the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father — he will bear witness to me. And you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning.*

The vision of a community dwelling in God's unconditional and universal love may sound like an impossible dream, but in God all things are possible (Mark 10:27). The radical conversion needed to overcome the sin of racism is made possible by the Holy Spirit. Sent by the risen Christ, the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts and in our midst to empower us to live truly as God's people. By the power of the Holy Spirit acting in us, we can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine (Eph. 3:20). Jesus assured his disciples that the abiding presence of the Spirit would empower them to be faithful.

(#5)



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## ALTERNATE SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

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### SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

Matthew 22:1-14	<i>Guests at a Banquet</i>
Matthew 29:16-20	<i>Making Disciples of All Nations</i>
Mark 12:28-31	<i>The Great Commandment</i>
Luke 10:25-37	<i>The Parable of the Good Samaritan</i>
John 15:7-10	<i>Dwelling in God's Love</i>
John 15:12-17	<i>Love One Another</i>
Romans 12:9-21	<i>Mutual Love</i>
Romans 13:8-14	<i>Duties toward One Another</i>
1 Corinthians 12:12-31	<i>Mystical Body</i>
1 Corinthians 13:1-13	<i>Love</i>
Galatians 3:23-29	<i>What Faith Has Brought Us</i>
Ephesians 4:1-6, 15	<i>Unity in Diversity</i>
Ephesians 4:31-32	<i>Get Rid of Anger</i>
Philippians 1:27-30	<i>United in Faith and Struggle</i>
Philippians 2:1-5	<i>Plea for Unity and Humility</i>
1 John 2:7-11	<i>One Who Hates His Brother is in Darkness</i>
1 John 4:20-21	<i>Whoever Loves God Must Love His Brother</i>
Acts 10:34-43	<i>God's Shows No Partiality in Race</i>
Acts 10:44-48	<i>The Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit</i>



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# PRAYERS FOR RACIAL JUSTICE



## AN ANTI-RACISM LITANY

Repeat after each line: **“We need to create an anti-racist church.”**

As long as any of our churches remain closed or resistant to invite, welcome and embrace people of different races and ethnicities...

**“We need to create an anti-racist church.”**

As long as hiring and appointing ‘a satisfactory minimum of’ qualified people of color to decision-making and other positions in our parishes, schools and pastoral center is done out of tokenism...

**“We need to create an anti-racist church.”**

As long as qualified persons of color seeking a position as principal or teacher comes against a ‘need not apply’ attitude in any school in the Archdiocese...

**“We need to create an anti-racist church.”**

As long as key lay and priest advisory bodies- Finance Committee, Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women, Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, Presbyteral Council, Priests’ Placement Board and Consultors- do not reflect the proportionate diversity of laity and priests in the Archdiocese...

**“We need to create an anti-racist church.”**

As long as racial and ethnic slurs are directed at children on our athletic courts, fields and playgrounds...

**“We need to create an anti-racist church.”**

As long as any teacher in our schools feel the need to ‘lighten up’ or ‘tough up’ on children because of their color...

**“We need to create an anti-racist church.”**

As long as studies in our schools do not include the experiences and achievements of people of color...

**“We need to create an anti-racist church.”**

As long as parish celebrations do not reflect the diversity of foods reflected in the cultures of its parishioners...

**“We need to create an anti-racist church.”**

*(Continued on page 30)*



(Continued from page 29)

As long as parish celebrations of Mass in Spanish, Polish and other languages are relegated to church or school basements...

**"We need to create an anti-racist church."**

As long as liturgical celebrations in any of our churches do not reflect respect for the cultural diversity of its parishioners...

**"We need to create an anti-racist church."**

As long as priests coming from different countries, and priests of different racial and ethnic backgrounds born in the U.S., lack the necessary supports to be accepted and integrate well into parish life and presbyteral collegiality...

**"We need to create an anti-racist church."**

As long as parish-sharing relationships reflect only monetary, one way sharing...

**"We need to create an anti-racist church."**

As long as our evangelization efforts rule out reaching out to black people because we assume "most black people are Baptists," or to Hispanic people because "they'll want Mass in Spanish"...

**"We need to create an anti-racist church."**

As long as our churches and schools see no need to learn about and to celebrate the cultures of our parishioners and neighbors...

**"We need to create an anti-racist church."**

As long as our parishes and people see no need to work against discrimination in housing, healthcare, education and jobs...

**"We need to create an anti-racist church."**

As long as any Catholic who claims to be a disciple of Jesus Christ cannot look into the eyes of a person of color and see a brother or sister they would embrace, share peace with, and accompany on their faith journey...

**"We need to create an anti-racist church."**

(Continued on page 31)



(Continued from page 30)

**G**od of all peoples, you created man and woman in an array of colors mirroring the promised covenant rainbow at the end of the great flood.  
The human race has its beginnings in Africa. Adam and Eve, our first parents, were created out of the rich clay soil of Africa;  
Abraham and Sarah, our great ancestors in faith, were people of color;  
as was Mary and Jesus, your son.

**S**t. Vincent de Paul was a priest, white in skin color, who cared for the poor and abandoned;  
Blessed Kateri Tekawitha was a Native princess red in skin color;  
St. Juan Diego was a young man dark brown in skin color;  
St. Andre Kim Taegon was a Korean martyr yellow in skin color;  
St. Katherine Drexel, foundress of the Sisters of Blessed Sacrament,  
a white woman of privilege, dedicated her life to being a mother to the downtrodden of our nation who were Native and African American.  
Many saints of your Church mirror the diversity of that rainbow:  
black, white, brown, red, and yellow.  
We are made in an incredible array of colors captured in the mystery and wonder of being made in Your image and likeness.

**G**od of unity, help us to appreciate our differences.  
Help us not be color blind, but to appreciate and learn from  
the great spectrum of languages, traditions and characteristics  
that each race and ethnic group celebrates in themselves.  
Help us to build rather than tear down.  
Help us to grow in the knowledge of others,  
for such knowledge can only deepen our bond with You.  
Give us the courage and the strength to risk  
a word, a gesture, a hand  
in fellowship with all people  
in order to build an anti-racist church,  
a church which stands against those who seek to divide,  
a church which longs for union with You.  
We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

AMEN



## THANKSGIVING LITANY 2008

In a time of financial insecurity,  
we are grateful because we have the security of our faith.

In a time of world turmoil,  
we are grateful that we have chosen the ways of peace.

In a time of grave injustice,  
we are grateful that we been called to promote justice.

In a time of despair,  
we are grateful that we know the virtue of hope.

In a time of uncertainty when the fire of hate and fear is fueled again,  
we are grateful to hold on to charity.

**M**ay this time become a Kairos moment,  
A critical moment when we all turn towards  
A deeper understanding of solidarity and security.

May all our sisters and brothers  
Receive your gifts  
And may we all share  
The abundance of your Love.

Jane Deren, Ph.D,  
2008



## WE BELIEVE THAT...

We Believe that...

**All: To Have HOPE**

Is to believe that history continues to be open  
to God's vision for the world and to human creativity.

We Believe that...

**All: To Have HOPE**

Is to continue affirming  
that it is possible to create a different world  
without hunger, without injustice, without discrimination.

We Believe that...

**All: To Have HOPE**

Is to be God's co-worker;  
a collaborator with women and men of good will  
tearing down walls, destroying borders  
building bridges, planting, sowing

We Believe that...

**All: To Have HOPE**

Is to believe in revolutionary potential of faith  
the prophetic power of living faith-fully  
to have hope is to leave doors, windows, hearts open  
so that the Spirit can enter, transform and make things new.

We Believe that...

**All: To Have HOPE**

Is to believe that life wins over death  
to begin again as many times as necessary  
to live with soul  
moving into spaces that God is creating for us and leading us to.

We Believe that...

**All: To Have HOPE**

Is to believe that hope is what endures  
that hope is what sustains  
that hope is what gives us life

We Believe that...

**All: To have HOPE, is to live.**



## THE BLESSINGS OF CHANGE

*Begin by taking a few moments to become centered and aware of God's presence.*

*Proclamation [Dt. 30:19:20, adapted]*

**I** have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse.  
**I** Choose life then, that you and your descendents may live, by loving the Lord, your God,  
heeding his voice, and holding fast to him.

For that will mean life for you, a long life for you to live on the land,  
**which the Lord swore he would give to your ancestors**

Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Rachel.

**C**hange sometimes feels like a blessing-sometimes like a curse.

Reflect, for a short time on the changes you have experienced in your life-and how you may have been able to choose the life that was present in the times of change.

*After this time of reflection, pray together:*

**L**ord and source of all gifts  
**L**We rejoice in the fullness of your holy generosity.

We thank you for the gift of change,  
That gift of newness that opens doors  
closed by habit and routine.

**R. Blessed are you, Lord our God, Who gives spice to our life with change.**

We bless You and thank you as well  
for that which is stable and unchanging  
for the ancient and traditional  
which give meaning to the new and different.

**R. Blessed are you, Lord our God, Who gives spice to our life with change.**

We thank you for the capacity for change in our lives  
for without change  
There can be no real growth,  
and not true life.

**R. Blessed are you, Lord our God, Who gives spice to our life with change.**

*(Continued on page 35)*



*(Continued from page 34)*

We are grateful for those persons

who through their gifts of excitement and adventure  
have taught us not to fear change,  
not to resist the new.

**R. Blessed are you, Lord our God, Who gives spice to our life with change.**

May our hearts be ever-changing, ever in growth,

as we journey to you, who are forever fresh and new,  
yet forever the same.

**Amen.**

*From Prayers for the Domestic Church,  
BY EDWARD M. HAYS*



## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Leader:** Lord we have not appreciated or respected  
the image of God in the members of the human family,  
we have not loved others as we have loved ourselves, or  
done to others as we would have them do to us.

**All:** Some have kept silent in the face of injustice and inequality,  
while others have sacrificed their lives in fighting injustice and inequity.

**Leader:** Some enjoy prosperity in the face of the neighbor's needs,  
others have been and continue to be exploited and deprived  
of the basic necessities for dignified human living.

**All:** Some families live together for security while others  
have been historically and are even today separated  
from parents, husbands, wives, children, their homelands and their communities.

**Leader:** Shame on those who make unjust laws and publish oppressive decrees,  
depriving the weakest of God's people of their rights! (Isaiah 10:1-2a)

**All:** Shame on those who build their houses by unjust means, who obtain luxuries by fraud,  
who make their neighbors work without pay,  
giving them no wage for their labor! (Jeremiah 22:13).

**Leader:** Shame on those who turn justice upside down and bring righteousness to the group,  
who persecute the guiltless, hold people to ransom, repel the needy at the gage.  
(Amos 5:7,12b)

**All:** I was hungry and you gave me no food; I was thirsty and you gave me no drink;  
I was a stranger and you did not welcome me; naked and you did not clothe me;  
sick and in prison and you did not visit me.

**Leader:** Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to the least of these,  
you did it to Me. (Matthew 25:42-43,45).

*From: Ecumenical Consultation on Anti-Racism,  
March 19-20  
(UCC Draft Handbook on Anti-Racism)*



## PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

### Left Side:

Lord, you are the Light of the world.  
You came into this world to bring true peace and  
a right relationship between all people and God,  
between individuals,  
between nations and between all peoples and the whole creation.  
Amidst the confusion of today's world,  
empower us to stand firmly on the side of goodness,  
justice and lasting truth according to your will.

### Right Side:

Help us to identify, expose and confront the  
root causes and the structures of injustices at all levels  
which exploit and destroy your children and creation.  
Help us to commit our lives to a new value system  
where life is nurtured and abundant.

### All:

Help us develop a new understanding of sharing  
in which those who have been marginalized by reasons of  
gender, age, economic and political condition, religion,  
sexual orientation, ethnic origin and disability  
take their place at the center of all decisions and actions as equal partners.  
Help us to be open to one another,  
as friends on the basis of  
common commitment, mutual trust, confession and forgiveness.  
This is our prayer,  
for the glory of your name  
and the good of all people and creation.

AMEN.



## LITANY OF NON-VIOLENCE

**P**rovident God, aware of my own brokenness,  
I ask the gift of courage to identify how and where  
I am in need of conversion in order to live in  
solidarity with all Earth's people.

Deliver me from the violence of superiority and disdain.

**Grant me the desire, and the humility, to listen  
with special care to those whose experiences  
and attitudes are different from my own.**

Deliver me from the violence of greed and privilege.

**Grant me the desire, and the will, to live simply  
so others may have their just share of Earth's resources.**

Deliver me from the silence that gives consent  
to abuse, war and evil.

**Grant me the desire, and the courage, to risk speaking  
and acting for the common good.**

Deliver me from the violence of irreverence,  
exploitation and control.

**Grant me the desire, and the strength, to act  
responsibly within the cycle of creation.**

**G**od of love, mercy and justice,  
acknowledging my complicity in those attitudes,  
actions and words which perpetuate violence,  
I beg the grace of a non-violent heart.

**AMEN.**

Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-The-Woods.  
Breaking boundaries, creating hope.





### KINDERGARTENER'S PRAYER FOR LOVE AND PEACE

Dear God,  
Help us to show love  
to those who do not like us and  
help us to show them how to be peaceful.

Let us all remember that we are your children.

You made each one of us.

We love you.

- Juanita & Caylon,  
*Children of Peace School*  
*Kindergarten*

### FIRST GRADER'S PRAYER OF LOVE FOR EVERYONE

Dear God,

Are you listening today?

You listen to everything that we pray.

Help us to love one another no matter the color people are.

We will be kind and gentle to each other.

Help us each day to love all people no matter how they look.

AMEN

- Soledad & Jesus,  
*Children of Peace School*  
*1<sup>st</sup> Grade*



## OFFERING ONESELF

Dear Jesus,

Let me offer this PRAYER  
to you, my father.

Let me offer my HEART  
to all the suffering people in this world.

Let me offer my HAND  
to anyone who falls or gets hurt.

Let me offer my LOVE  
to any people who have not treated me kind.

Let me offer my WORDS  
to people who call me names.

Let me offer my ACTIONS  
to show the way.

Let me offer this PRAYER  
to show my love and bring peace to this world.

AMEN

- Connor Yanz,  
Christ the King School,  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade



## PRAYER FOR COURAGE

**O** God, we call your holy name to give us courage.  
We need to have your blessings so  
that we can treat everyone with love and understanding.  
And what about all the poor and those we do not understand-  
we pray for tolerance so that in our hearts we can  
wipe away the sins of hatred and intolerance especially  
for people we wrongfully judge.  
Let us love each other as  
You have loved us.

- Colleen Young,  
Children of Peace School  
6<sup>th</sup> Grade

## GOD HELP US

**D**ear God,  
Help us to see  
that we are all created in your image and likeness.  
Help us to realize  
that the differences between us make us the special individuals that we are.  
Help us to see past one's  
different clothing, customs and languages.  
Help us to seek  
universal peace here and in heaven. Amen

- Natalie Svajlenka,  
St. Alexander School  
6<sup>th</sup> Grade



## I FIND JUSTICE

I find justice  
within the friendship of two people  
of different races.

I find justice  
despite the prejudice because of  
beliefs, and the amount of our paycheck.

I find justice  
inside the heart of a young child.

I find justice  
in a newborn baby who's  
innocent and mild.

I find justice  
through the good times and the bad.

I find justice  
from the laughter and good times  
I share with my father and mother.

I find justice beneath the silent sparkling stars.

I find justice in this country  
despite innocent people behind bars.

I find justice.

-Arielle Contreras,  
*St. Pius V School,*  
*6<sup>th</sup> Grade*



## YOU SAY

Dear Lord,

The world says hate.

You say love.

The world says revenge.

You say forgive.

The world says destroy

You say create.

Help us listen to your Word.

Amen.

- Grades 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>,  
*Resurrection Catholic Academy*

## POWER FOR CHANGE

Dear God,

Give us the power to

vanquish racism throughout the world forever and ever.

Give us the power to

teach our children not to be racist or to hate other people because  
of their differences.

Give us the power to

come together and stop racism before  
racism can destroy everything we know and love.

And, finally, thank you, God,

for giving us the power to stop racism and bring out peace through the world,  
not just for us, but also for every human being alive.

Thanks to you God, we can live our lives the way we are supposed to and  
that is without hate and racism in our world.

I know that no matter what happens,

peace will overcome all evil in the world. Amen.

- Cyril Mira,  
*St. Denis School*  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade



## THE PERFECT MOSAIC

We are one people,  
    under God's blue sky.  
We are one race,  
    the race of human beings.  
We are one mosaic,  
    with many different pieces,  
    all fitting together, perfectly.  
Yet some do not understand,  
    that though we appear different,  
    we belong together, in harmony.  
Some people think that if people look different that they do,  
    it is a bad thing.  
But what would a mosaic be without different colored pieces?  
Without different shapes and sizes?  
It would be nothing, it would not be interesting.  
But with many colors, shapes, and sizes,  
    it becomes beautiful, like us.  
Everyone is beautiful,  
    no matter what their color of skin,  
    no matter what their shape, or size, or belief.  
Because we are one people,  
    under God's blue sky.  
We are on race,  
    the race of human beings.  
We are one mosaic,  
With many different pieces,  
    all fitting together, perfectly.

-Vanessa Micel,  
*St. Athanasius School*  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade



## EIGHTH GRADERS' PRAYERS

O My God,

I praise and thank you for all of the different  
people and ethnic backgrounds they come from.  
Without these diversities, the world would not be what it is today.  
I am sorry from the bottom on my heart if  
I was ever ignorant or made fun of any ethnic backgrounds or  
if I ever used any racial slurs.  
I ask you for all of your forgiveness and for your guidance.  
Please fulfill me with the power of the Holy Spirit to  
not show hatred toward anyone for their religion, race or creed.  
I ask this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

- Patrick Hughes,  
*St. Albert the Great School,*  
*8<sup>th</sup> Grade*

Dear God,

You created us all in your image.  
Please, with the help of your Son, through the Holy Spirit,  
let us entrust the job of judging others to you,  
so we may take part in the loving and caring of  
others without fear of discrimination which  
prevents us from embracing our brothers and sisters.  
We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus. Amen.

- Rory Quinn,  
*St. Edward School*  
*8<sup>th</sup> Grade*

Lord, help me to see what others do not,  
and help me not to look at what others dwell on.  
Thank you for making me different,  
but no less special, and help me to look past others' differences.

- Lyndi Senkpiel,  
*St. Daniel the Prophet School*  
*8<sup>th</sup> Grade*



## LORD, TEACH US

**M**y Lord,  
Teach us to live in peace.  
Teach us to love, how you love.  
Teach us how to be fair with others.  
Teach us to walk in your footsteps.  
When you teach... we will teach others.

– Madeleine Havey,  
*St. John of the Cross School*



## BECOMING A STRANGER TO HATE AND ANGER

• • • I pray everyday

that our world will become

a stranger to hate and anger and

a friend to love and happiness • • •

*Ashley Urbanik,  
St. Louis de Montfort School*



## WE PRAY HERE TODAY

Lord,  
We pray here today, as a whole;  
That you will bless every man, woman and child with your  
unconditional love.  
We pray that we may learn to love each other.  
We come here today with open hearts,  
hoping that you will fill our hearts with many gifts of love,  
faith, harmony and peace.  
We long for peace on earth so that all brothers and sisters of  
your creation  
may hold hands...  
We humbly pray that you will show us what we cannot see.  
We ask that you show us the way to solve our problems  
without violence.  
Our prayer is that you show us that you created us equally  
and that no one, man or woman, is perfect.  
It is not our job to look down on others because of their  
visible differences.  
Instead we should smile upon others for their inner beauty  
that you blessed us with.  
Lord, let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with us,  
right here, right now.  
Lord, help us to change for the better and stand united in  
peace and love.

Amen.

*Crystal Idom,  
St. John DeLaSalle Academy of Fine Arts*



## PRAYER FOR TEACHERS

**G**ood and Gracious God  
Teacher of all peoples,  
Planner of all divine lessons,

Walk with us as we navigate the difficult terrain of teaching and talking  
about race relations and differences with our students.

Help us find the right words and actions to heal our students'  
pain when faced with being outsiders and  
their indignation when wronged by others.

Aid us as we lead our students from easy analysis of the history of racism  
to a complex and compassionate understanding of that  
which has divided your people for too long.

Give us the courage to teach the truth, even when it is  
unpopular and uncomfortable and  
bound to get us into some trouble.

Always lead us back to the best teacher  
of loving justice and clear-eyed compassion,  
your son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray... Amen.

*ESW*  
*Queen of Peace High School*



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## THE CHICAGO COALITION FOR INTERRELIGIOUS LEARNING

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### CATHOLICS, JEWS, MUSLIMS WORKING TOGETHER: LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER

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#### WHY PURSUE INTERRELIGIOUS LEARNING?

We share one city and one world. In Chicago we no longer think of each other as outsiders, newly arrived from some far away country. We live in a multi-religious, multi-ethnic, pluralistic society in the United States where individual and community freedoms, including the freedom of religion, are honored and protected. Muslims, Jews and Christians are each other's colleagues, classmates, neighbors, friends, and sometimes relatives.

#### *We share common religious roots.*

Followers of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam the three "Abrahamic faiths," trace their spiritual roots to Abraham. We believe in one God though we worship and call upon God in different ways and with different understandings. We share similar ethical and moral values, and some key religious practices.

#### *We can grow in our own faith.*

Learning about each other's traditions encourages each of us to learn more about and deepen our own faith.

#### *We are encouraged by our religious traditions to learn about and to respect others.*

The Second Vatican Council reminds Catholics: "The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these [other] religions... The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men." (Nostra Aetate, #2)

(Continued on page 51)



*(Continued from page 50)*

**I**n Judaism, the Torah teaches us that every human being is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). This not only compels us to strive to be holy because God is holy (Leviticus 19:2), but also that we recognize the Divine spark in each person. Indeed, in the Talmud, the Rabbis teach that any act of disrespect to another human being is an act of disrespect towards God Himself (Genesis 24). Judaism also teaches that the righteous of all nations have a share in the world to come so that we must be tolerant, understanding and informed as to the various ways righteousness may be achieved.

**I**n Islam the acceptance of human diversity, is stressed in the Qur'anic verse: "Had God so willed He could have made you (Mankind) as one community, but that He may try you He made you as you are. So vie with one another in good works. To God you will all return and then he will inform you of that in which you differed." (5:48)



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FROM THE ISLAMIC TRADITION

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VERSES FROM THE HOLY QURAN

SAY YE:

“We believe in God, and the revelation given to us and to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac and Jacob and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to all Prophets from their Lord: we make no differences between one and another of them: and we bow to God in Islam.”

SURA II, v. 136

If the enemy incline towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace, and trust in God: for He is the One that heareth and knoweth (all things).

SURA VIII, v. 61

And the servants of (God) Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, “Peace!”

SURA XXV, v. 63

O Mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye know each other (not that ye may despise each other).

Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).

SURA XLIX, v. 13



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## WEBSITES

- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)
- Education for Justice [www.educationforjustice.org](http://www.educationforjustice.org)
- The Chicago Coalition for InterReligious Learning [www.ccirl.org](http://www.ccirl.org)
- Teaching Tolerance [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)
- The Archdiocese of Chicago's Antiracism Team's Website [www.dwellinmylove.org](http://www.dwellinmylove.org).