

Being an Inclusive Church ...and not an exclusive club



Racial Justice Sunday 9 SEPTEMBER 2012

ONE RACE • THE HUMAN RACE
carj
Catholic Association for Racial Justice

**churches
together**
IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

RESOURCE PACK

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Racial Justice Sunday
9 September 2012

1. Introduction

Our Churches have a tremendous opportunity to evidence God's Kingdom on earth by taking deliberate action to include members of Britain's minority ethnic communities in our congregations.

The term 'ethnic minority or minority ethnic' emphasises the fact that **we all have an ethnic origin** and the particular groups referred to are in the minority; as opposed to the majority ethnic group.

Most institutions find it almost impossible to respond positively to the idea that action is necessary if they are to include their minority ethnic communities, and thereby begin to reap the potential benefits of ethnic diversity. Sad to say, many churches are no different in this respect.

The difficulty some Churches have is in not understanding the difference between allowing participation, and actively seeking the participation of those not already involved. This is compounded by the phenomenon of institutional inertia. Our Churches don't always consciously decide never to change, it's just that most of us in our Churches get comfortable with the way things are.

Whether it's the times of the service, the music that accompanies the singing, tea/coffee after the service (or not), the way small groups are organised, how Sunday activities are run, not to mention who sits on which 'pew', we are generally more comfortable with the way things are, with what we have become used to. We get familiar with the familiar.

Although there is a general lack of awareness and understanding when it comes to the question of multi-ethnic Church, institutional inertia is probably one of the most critical factors causing our Churches not to be more responsive to the opportunities Britain's minority ethnic communities present.

However, whatever the cause, we believe that the Church would begin to grow in our cities, towns and localities if Church Leaders were to:

1. Declare their commitment to inclusion and ethnic diversity
2. Develop programmes to reach out to minority ethnic Britons and
3. Teach and encourage Church members to recognise the value of ethnic diversity.

2. Background on Being an Inclusive Church ...not an exclusive club



Churches need to deal with the challenge of ethnic diversity whilst also recognising the value and opportunities that diversity brings. Ethnic diversity enriches the life and witness of the Church, through the clergy, laity, diocesan and parish communities, ethnic chaplaincies, and Church institutions and agencies, at all levels.

Catholic social teaching on racism

The Church is universal and embraces all ethnicities. 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.

Why inclusion is important and what we can do

Ethnic minorities need our solidarity and support as many continue to face discrimination and disadvantages within society. Each of us can learn more about how social structures inhibit the educational, social, economic and political participation and advancement of ethnic minority group members. We

can also join with others in social, political and other action to bring about greater equality and justice for disadvantaged communities.

What does 'ethnic minority' mean?

Ethnic group is defined as an individual's self-defined identity. Historically ethnic minorities have included visible Black and Minority Ethnic groups like African, African Caribbean, Asylum Seeker, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Gypsies, Indian, Migrant (including the undocumented), Mixed heritage, Other Asian, Other Black, Pakistani, Refugee, Roma and Traveller. However Other White minorities are also increasingly included. Currently Latin Americans (including Brazilians, Colombians, Ecuadoreans, Bolivians and Peruvians) are campaigning to gain formal status as an officially recognised ethnic minority group in the UK, to promote their integration.

Disadvantage matters

- † Gypsies, Roma and Travellers experience some of the worst prejudice and life chances of any ethnic minority group. Higher rates of poverty and exclusion contribute to less than a quarter of children gaining 5 A-C grade GCSEs compared to a national average of over half, and a life expectancy that is 10 years below the national average for both men and women.
- † Asylum seekers and others with no recourse to public funds often face severe hostility, hardship, poverty, overcrowded accommodation and resulting health problems.
- † High rates of unemployment and prejudice mean that 65% of Bangladeshis and 55% of Pakistanis live in poverty. This compares to 20% of White British people.
- † Over 55% of young Black people and 31% of young Asian people are unemployed, compared to 20% of young White people.
- † One in 4, that is 25% of the prison population, is from an ethnic minority, although ethnic minorities constitute only 11% of the UK population.
- † Overcrowding in housing affects 15% of Pakistani households, 21% of African households and 26% of Bangladeshi households, compared to less than 2% of White British households. The impact of overcrowding on health is serious, especially for children.

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We are called to act justly NOW. Everything before BUT is...

We are all accustomed to the smooth tones of political or financial spokespeople who will wax lyrical about this or that situation. They tell us how good or bad things are and what they are doing to counter what their predecessors did or did not do. There is always that point at which they get to the BUT moment. BUT we are in the middle of a financial crisis... BUT we are restricted in what we are allowed to do... BUT it's not our fault... BUT... With this one little word, whatever has been said or promised before can be excused or sidelined. The BUT word allows them and us off the hook. It allows accountability and action to be offset.

With Jesus, there are no ifs or buts or maybe's. NOW is the time for action, NOW is the time for love and compassion and humility and service. Justice is to be delivered in the here and now. Justice is to be pursued today in our relationships. Jesus teaches about the cost of discipleship when in Luke's Gospel someone says 'I will follow you, Lord; BUT let me first say farewell to those at my home'. Jesus said to him 'No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'

So it is with issues of Racial Justice. It's easy and we are accustomed to offering the soothing BUT... which leaves those who are treated unjustly, those who are abused and ridiculed because of their race or colour or gender to remain in that place. God's justice demands that we proclaim God's justice now, without the BUTs and the excuses or the platitudes. We are called to act justly NOW.



3. Biblical reflection



Isaiah 35: 4-7 God's saving love

This is a joyful prophecy of restoration from an unlikely place. Here we are in Judah, the southern of the Israelite kingdoms, centred on Jerusalem. But many of the people are in exile in Babylon, and Jerusalem is a fearful and despairing city, defeated and without direction. At the heart of Isaiah is a profound sense of the sovereignty of God and the moral holiness of God; this is a God who desires justice and right relationship, and the people have had their sins of corruption, oppression of the poor and religious complacency read back to them in the most forthright terms imaginable. But the God who speaks in and to Isaiah is also a God of compassion, a God who cares, and here is a word of hope and promise in the darkest of times.

It is a poem that describes the homecoming of those who have suffered terribly through long years. But they will not return by the long caravan route; rather, they will be led home directly across the desert. These would not appear at first to be promising words; for those who lived in that part of the world, the desert was a dangerous, featureless place of shifting sands, where wild animals lurked, where there was no shelter, a place of vulnerability and exposure to the elements. It was a place of death.

But in the presence and glory of the living God, even the desert will be

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transformed. The mirages of the desert will become real pools of water, grass will grow, and a fearful road will become a way on which all will travel safely. Their condition will be utterly changed. This is not a spiritualized prophecy; it is the good news of God's deliverance for those who were in despair. The captives in Babylon will return home, the land will be renewed. It is a promise to hearten and encourage. In the words of Isaiah, so often used by Jesus, 'Be strong. Don't be afraid.'

For reflection

1. What does 'homecoming' suggest or mean to us? What images and feelings does the word evoke? How do we think about coming home to or with God?
2. What do we think 'homecoming' might mean to uprooted people - refugees, exiles, those who are landless or homeless? How might we better align ourselves with the God who brings the exiles home?

Psalm 146: 7-10 God will bring justice

God is given all of the credit for executing justice on behalf of the oppressed, for feeding the hungry, for setting prisoners free, for opening the eyes of the blind, etc. With the psalmists we too, in spite of restrictive patterns of behaviour that exclude many from our communities, live out our lives continually in the presence of God who blesses us with the gift of life and salvation each waking day. God's offer of abundant life is to all humankind. Racial Justice Sunday is a timely reminder that in spite of the restrictive and ungenerous habits that deny the humanity of others, God will bring justice and overthrow injustices. Gratitude and generosity are necessary habits that witness to the One in whom is our hope and life. Praise the Lord.

For reflection

1. Consider the implications of living a life of justice as a fundamentally different way of seeing our world, our priorities, and lifestyles.
2. Reflect on the choice we need to make between a life dominated by a consumer/market world or one that trusts in God's faithfulness and generosity. The choice here is between two different kinds of action (not between action and passivity).

James 2: 1-5 Do our words and actions include or exclude?

The bottom line for James is that we are all accountable to God for our words and deeds. What do our words and actions say of God's love, grace and generosity? Is the faith that influences our actions modelled after the way of God in Christ?

Starting with a query about what faith actually is, James uses the social class of the time as the key issue to explore the question. He exposes the prevailing human tendency to defer to those who are visibly wealthy while dismissing those at the lower end of social standing. Wealth and influence are used as markers with the implications that those for whom these are favourably stacked expect to be the insiders and to receive certain privileges.

By uncovering the excluding pattern of classism and related acts of snobbery, prejudice and favouritism, James' challenge went beyond the 'logic' that the wealthy person is good and the poor person is bad. The central teaching of faith is 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' James puts his listeners (and audience) in an uncomfortable position by underscoring that belief in Jesus must be seen in the practice of the command to love one's neighbour, especially the poor. To ignore the poor is to dishonour God.



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In the process, James tackles head-on the problem of discrimination in the Christian community, maintaining that faith in Jesus Christ bears directly upon our treatment of persons. All excluding habits based on social ordering that privileges the rich is a betrayal of the way of Jesus. It is not insignificant that James speaks of 'acts of favouritism.' By employing the plural he calls to account all forms of prejudice and discrimination based on outward appearances such as disability, ethnicity, class, gender, age, sexuality, dress etc.

James has much to contribute to our thinking about acts and experiences of discrimination and exclusion. For James discrimination of any kind is inconsistent with Christian faith! And, to work towards justice is a calling Christians cannot pursue by their own strength. We are not alone: it is God's gracious presence and power and wisdom that makes it possible for us to live as James describes.

For reflection

1. Reflect on what your actions suggest about your faith and Jesus' way.
2. James wants the good news to be experienced – by each believer and through each believer to the many others who need a tangible expression of grace. Is it possible that James may be reframing the question: 'Where is the good news for your neighbour?'
3. What has gone wrong in our life together for prejudices and excluding habits, rather than the preferences of God, to be manifested among us?





Mark 7: 31-37 Jesus cures a deaf man

Here is a story that points us firmly towards loving others in Christ's way. Now, a man who is deaf and can hardly speak has been brought by his friends in the hope that Jesus can heal him also. The first thing that Jesus does is to take the man away on his own; people with hearing difficulties find it particularly hard to communicate in crowds. Then he uses the language of touch to explain to the man what he is going to do; finally, he speaks a word in Aramaic, Ephphatha, 'be opened', which is perfect for lipreading.

Jesus has recognised the man's situation, responded appropriately to his needs and enabled him to be fully present and involved in his healing. The man is able to hear and speak, no longer marginalized by his community. In the words of Isaiah 35: 6 'those who cannot speak will shout for joy.' It is an echoed testimony to the healing and liberating power of the Messiah and an invitation to us to also 'be opened' to the word of life.

For reflection

1. Have we, or people we are close to, experienced exclusion for who we are? How did this affect us? In what ways was this exclusion overcome, or in what ways could it have been?
2. What would it involve for us, and for our churches, to respond appropriately to the needs of others in ways which are empowering and inclusive? How do we think we need to 'be opened'?

4. SUGGESTIONS FOR HOMILY

Homily suggestion 1

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I remember some years ago celebrating a First Communion mass for thirty or so children in a large culturally diverse parish in West London. The children came from all the different communities in the parish including a significant number from the local community of travellers. The celebration itself was fantastic – very prayerful, very joyful and at times very chaotic. The reason, however, I remember the celebration so well was that when I came out of the church the first thing I noticed was a large sign in the widow of a pub across the road saying ‘No Travellers Allowed’. It was at that moment I began to realize how important it was for the Church to be not just a welcoming community but a prophetic community as well. It was at that moment I began to understand the prophetic meaning of the Eucharist as an invitation to receive the Body of Christ and as a call to be the Body of Christ – to be a sign and instrument of communion to all who are excluded and marginalized.

Our readings today – for the 23rd Sunday of the year – are very appropriate for Racial Justice Sunday because they invite us to reflect on how God is always close to those who are excluded and marginalized. In the first reading Isaiah is writing to the People of Israel at a very difficult time in their history. They are in captivity in Babylon and Isaiah wants to give them hope and encouragement. ‘Courage’ he says ‘do not be afraid. Look your God is coming he is coming to save you.’ Isaiah assures them that God is with them and will lead them back to their homeland.

In the second reading James is very aware of the tendency of some in his community to give a lot of attention to the rich and to overlook the poor so he reminds them that ‘God choose those who were poor according to this world to be rich in faith and in the kingdom.’ Finally, in the Gospel Mark tells a very powerful story of how Jesus heals a man who is deaf and has a speech impediment. It is important to remember that this miracle takes place in Gentile territory and that the man would have felt excluded because of his dual disability. If we look closely we will see that there is a great richness in the detail of Mark’s story: Jesus takes the man aside and speaks to him privately, He puts his finger into the man’s ears and touches his tongue with spittle, He looks up to heaven and sighs and finally says or indeed prays ‘Ephata – Be Opened.’

There is a comforting message in those readings but also a very challenging message. They remind us, first of all, that God is always close to those who are suffering, excluded or marginalized – the Israelites in Babylon, the poor in James' community and the deaf man with a speech impediment. In the Gospel Jesus shows us how God is close to those who suffer and feel excluded when He treats the man with great respect and compassion (by taking him aside and speaking to him privately) and then restores him not only to full health but a full life in the community as well. An important part of our mission is to enable people to experience a sense welcome and a sense of belonging and inclusion in the Church. That is what Jesus did and that is what we are called to do.

As a member of an international religious order I have had the privilege over many years of studying with, living with and working with priests and religious from many different ethnic, cultural and national backgrounds – from Asia and Africa, from North and South America, from Northern Europe and Southern Europe and from Eastern Europe and Western Europe. At times it was very challenging but it has always been very enriching. It has helped me to see and experience that what unites us at the deepest level of our being is our common humanity and our common faith. The importance of celebrating Racial Justice Sunday in the Church is that it reminds us that although we come from different ethnic backgrounds, from different nations and different cultures we are all fundamentally sisters and brothers in Christ.

There is, however, a challenging message in those readings as well. As a Church we are called to be a prophetic community as well as a welcoming community in identifying and addressing the causes of exclusion in our world and in our society today especially exclusion that is rooted in racial or ethnic prejudice. In the Gospel, Jesus had the courage to break through the laws, customs and perceptions that would have prevented a Jew reaching out to and touching a Gentile who was both deaf and dumb. Likewise we too are called to be 'prophets' – to open our eyes and 'see' the attitudes, the structures, the customs that cause or contribute to exclusion and like Jesus have the courage to do our utmost to change them.

One of the best examples of someone who by his words and example gave a prophetic witness against prejudice was Martin de Porres. Martin de Porres was born in Lima the illegitimate son of Spanish nobleman and a black former slave who was born in Panama. He grew up in poverty and when his mother couldn't support him he was confined to a primary school for two years. From his early years he experienced at first hand the stigma and suffering of prejudice. At the age of twelve he became an apprentice to a barber/surgeon learning to cut hair and to tend to wounds. At the age of fifteen he asked for admission to the

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Dominican Convent of the Rosary in Lima and was received first as servant boy, then as almoner and eventually received as a tertiary. When he was 34 after he had received the habit he was assigned to the infirmary where he remained in service until his death at the age of fifty nine. His ministry to those who were excluded – the homeless, the native Indians, those suffering from contagious disease and the newly arrived slaves from Africa – was truly remarkable. On one occasion he was rebuked by his superiors for bringing an aged beggar covered with ulcers to his own cell. When reprimanded he is reported to have said 'Compassion is preferable to cleanliness.' On another occasion he did the same for a poor Indian he found bleeding to death on the streets. Martin founded a residence for orphans and abandoned children and would regularly help to feed 150 people a day. In a society where the poor, the homeless, the native Indians and the newly arrived slaves from Africa were harshly treated Martin's witness is an enduring example and call to treat those who are vulnerable and excluded because of their ethnic, cultural or social background with the respect and dignity that they deserve as being created in the image of God. In other words, Martin de Porres inspires us to do what we can to combat prejudice and racism through the personal and communal witness that we give as individuals, as communities and as a Church. It is no wonder, therefore, that he is the patron not only of barbers but African Americans, Race relations and Social Justice. St. Martin de Porres pray for us.

Homily suggestion 2

Being an Inclusive Body, not an Exclusive Club

Two millennia before the murder of Stephen Lawrence, a hate-crime that brought us as a nation face-to-face with racism in our country, the apostles Paul and James trumpeted Christianity's zero tolerance policy on racism: see Colossians 3:11 and James 2:1-9.

The Lawrence Inquiry gave us Macpherson's now famous definition of Institutional Racism: 'The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racial stereotyping.' As a nation we were chastened and our institutions vowed to do better.

Christianity, which regrettably has become an institution, isn't beyond the need for self-examination on this subject.



As Christians we're not seeking or offering membership to an exclusive club called the church, we are members of an inclusive body called Christ. Were Christianity ever to reduce 'church' to being somewhere we go, rather than being who we are, we'd be on the slippery religious-slope to excluding some and including others and judging some to be worthy and others unworthy. Before we could say, 'Christ died for all' the organism would be an organisation; the movement a monument; and a vivifying relationship a stultifying religion. Christianity would be no more than Churchianity, a place where racism could be cultivated.

In reading his verdict, Mr Justice Treacy said that Stephen Lawrence had been 'swallowed up' by his attackers. I am reminded that Jesus Christ was also 'swallowed up' by his attackers in a grace-hate crime. There will be no inquiry or cold case review but as a community we should vow to do better. We know that salvation is by grace not race, so let's embrace gracism - **God's Ridiculous Agape Captivating Everyone.**

5. Hymn suggestions

One bread, One body

**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.

By John B Foley, SJ

© 1978, 1989 John B. Foley and New Dawn Music

Laudate no. 832, Celebration Hymnal no. 578

Other hymn suggestions

All are welcome, Marty Haugen, Laudate no. 458

Be not afraid, Robert J Dufford, Laudate no. 964, Celebration Hymnal no. 830

Christ be beside me, adapted by James Quinn, SJ, Laudate no. 910, Celebration Hymnal no.106. Text adapted from St Patrick's Breastplate, 8th century

Christ, be our Light, Bernadette Farrell, Laudate no. 883, Celebration Hymnal no. 891/S10

Whatsoever you do, by Willard F. Jabusch, Laudate no. 926, Celebration Hymnal no. 799

Laudate, *Decani Music, 2012*

Celebration Hymnal for Everyone, *McCrimmon Publishing Company Limited, Great Wakering, Essex, England, 1994*

6. Prayer suggestions

Loving God

We are all wonderfully made in your image
Help your world to see you in each face
To see that each person has value
Each person has a heart
Each person has a name
We thank you for all your people who work tirelessly to bring racism to an end
Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**
Amen.

Creator God

Who so lovingly made this world
Forgive us for not loving each other as we should.

When we stereotype people because of the colour of their skin
God, **Forgive Us**

When we dismiss someone's voice just because we do not understand their
accent
God, **Forgive Us**

When we judge others because they are not like us
God, **Forgive Us**

When we let past experiences cloud our judgment
God, **Forgive Us**

When we are bullied into racism by the media
God, **Forgive Us**

When we fail to learn more about other cultures
God, **Forgive Us**

When we do not speak up for our brothers and sister who are subject to racism
God, **Forgive Us**
Amen.

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Father God

We are truly sorry for all our thoughts and actions
that have not best pleased you.

We take a moment now to lift before you our prayers.

(One minute silence suggested)

Forgiving God

Strengthen us in our weakness

Guide us in our confusion

And bless us with wisdom as we continue
to fight the battle against discrimination
and win the struggle for Racial Justice.

Amen.

We pray for all people everywhere in God's world

We pray for the Church throughout the world
especially... places where Christians are persecuted
where issues divide its communities

where there is not yet one race, the human race.

We pray for this Church and its sister churches close by
for all who come here and all who are enquirers.

Lord we seek to do Your will

to live and not to count the cost

to love one another as You have loved us

through the self-emptying of Christ on the cross.

Lord, hear us. **Lord graciously hear us.**

We offer our prayers for all who are discriminated against
because of their ethnicity.

Lord, we know that the world is still a very unfair place
where the rich often do not share or seek to understand
what it is to be poor and marginalised

where to be White is still seen by too many as superior.

We know that Your Church is no better than many other places
and we are ashamed of this.

Guide our thoughts in the ways of love and peace.

Lord, hear us. **Lord graciously hear us.**

Amen.

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Creator God

Who so lovingly made this world
You are Magnificent
Awesome and Powerful
Glorious, Almighty
Compassionate, Forgiving
Generous and Kind
Loving, God.

We are all your children, made in your image.
Each one unique, special and different.
We praise your name forever
Most magnificent.
Awesome and Powerful
Glorious, Almighty
Compassionate, Forgiving
Generous and Kind
Loving, God.



7. Activities for children, young people and adults

a. Praying for forgiveness and reconciliation



Take a world map and put it on a table/ floor. Place on top of it a clear bowl of water. Invite people to take pebbles that represent sin/prayer for forgiveness and place it in the bowl of water. As the pebble sinks to the bottom of the bowl, focus on a part of the world (via the clear bowl of water) where this sin/prayer of

forgiveness needs to be reconciled with God. There could be a series of these prayer bowl stations around the room to facilitate a large group or congregation.

b. Passport of concerns

Invite the congregation to make **passports**, using an A5 or A4 piece of paper, folded in half.

Ask them to write where they were born, nationality and ethnic origin. Under each of these three headings invite them to write a concern taking place in that town/city/ country or about an ethnic community. For example:

BORN: London **CONCERN:** Poverty

NATIONALITY: British **CONCERN:** Unemployment and Racism

ETHNIC ORIGIN: Jamaican **CONCERN:** Young People's voice not being heard



Once these passports have been made the congregation is free to keep them and take them home for prayer or to swap them and pray with them at home.

c. Thank you cards

The thank you cards just need the maker to fold an A5 or A4 piece of paper, in half.

Invite the congregation to make/write thank you cards for God in terms of racial diversity and racial justice. Ask them to think about all there is to be grateful for. Once written, invite the congregation to either bring their cards to the front to place in a basket, take them home to pray over them (maybe placing them in their bible, on their fridge or desk at work) or swap them with someone in the congregation to take home and pray about.

d. A Racial Justice exercise: Being in and being out

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Coloured card or paper, chairs

Aim: To begin to explore issues and emotions of inclusion and exclusion and factors associated with them.

Exercise: Place chairs for all your participants in a circle.

Underneath each chair place a coloured piece of paper.

(The variety of different coloured paper will depend on the size of your group and how big you want the small groups to be e.g. for a group of 10 – 16 people, a variety of 3 colours will be necessary for 3 small groups).

On each piece of paper write: *'Hold this so others in the group can see the colour of your paper but not what is written; group together with those who have the same coloured paper as you and only speak with them.'*

Ask participants to take the piece of paper from under their seats and follow the instructions. You need to leave two or three seats with different coloured paper underneath that no-one else has, but containing the same instructions as the other papers.

Allow 5 minutes for the participants to group together and begin their conversations (you may want to suggest a topic for the participants to talk about).

Do not speak or make comment to the people with different coloured pieces of paper. If they try and speak to you, move away until the exercise is finished (unless they try to leave the space).



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Discussion:

Ask the excluded person:

- † How did it feel to be excluded from the group?
- † Did you try to become part of the group?
- † If yes, what did you do? If no, why not?

Ask the excluders:

- † How did it feel to be doing the excluding?

Continued discussion for all:

- † Can you think of a time when you felt different to others?
- † What one word would describe how you felt?
- † What could others have done to make you feel included?
- † Have you ever excluded anyone from a group? If yes, why?

Individual task at the end of the discussion:

- † Ask all participants to write on their papers, a list of things they could do to help people feel included.
- † The 'inclusion actions' could then be displayed on a wall or prioritised for action by the group or please identify your own way of taking forward the inclusion actions.

e. Other activities to celebrate ethnic diversity and challenge racial injustice

- † Play the **Black Eyed Peas** song '**Where is the Love?**' to open up a discussion topic or it can be played as a reflection song.
- † Put **pictures** up around the worship space that illustrate ethnicity, different cultures, nationalities and stories of racial justice and injustice.
- † Put **newspaper** articles up around the worship space that illustrate ethnicity, nationalities, different cultures and stories of racial justice and injustice, e.g. racism in football, young people in hoodies.
- † **BBC news**. Maybe have **BBC news** on silent in the background on a TV. This can illustrate how world news/racism/injustice takes place all the time but sometimes we ignore it, are deaf to it or even refuse to listen.
- † **World Food - Bring and Share Lunch** after Mass or a meeting. Invite the congregation to bring food from their own cultures or food they like from other countries.



8. Personal stories



Living in a new country means that you are a stranger

I came to Northern Ireland from Poland more than seven years ago. Living in a new country means that you are a stranger. New culture, new rules, new people and new language gives strong feelings of being different.

This is connected with our feelings of security. When you are a stranger you don't feel secure and safe – you don't know what to expect from the people around you and the place where you are. You have to be very careful and sensitive in what you do and say. When you add to that language difficulties and the fact that some English words with very different meanings like: live and leave or cut and cat, sound the same in foreign ears, you can then imagine how people might feel moving to a new country.

When I came here seven years ago, I discovered that people who live here are incredibly kind, I was very shocked when people stopped their cars and let me cross the street even if I wasn't on a marked road crossing, let me be first in queue at shops when I had only one or two things, said 'hello' to a stranger on the street. And I have to say that I got real support, which gave me the feeling of security and comfort, from people I met in church, who weren't just friendly but were friends to me, who cared about me and were willing to help me with any issue. They were like family to me.

Being welcoming is taking someone's hand and going with her or him through all the new things so she or he won't feel alone. This is what my church here in Northern Ireland did for me to make me feel included.

Experiences of exclusion

I have felt excluded so often that it was difficult choosing one incident. Sometimes I wonder if my exclusion has anything to do with being a woman or that being black has more to do with it?

The times I have felt most excluded have been in the church setting and this is probably because most of my activities are church related. One thing that happens and continues to surprise me relates to the following scenario.

I had been attending a particular church for almost a year and had gotten into the habit of staying for coffee after the service, when a lovely woman came up to me and said, 'Welcome, is this your first time?' and calling her by name, I politely explained to her that I had been attending for several months now.

However, there were several other almost identical incidents to come one after the other. The one that struck me most was when one Sunday my husband and I showed up somewhat early for church as he was leading worship that day. Because it was earlyish there was someone at the door. He was well known to us, or so we believed. We had spoken to him on countless occasions but this time, in January 2011, he was rather reluctant to open the door. My husband and I were both baffled when he cracked open the huge glass door, poked his head out and asked, 'Can I help you?' at that point, calling him by name, we pointed out to him that my husband was in fact there every Sunday for the last three and a half years, but that he was a little early today as he was preparing to lead the service. He then said to us by way of an excuse. 'Well you never know who is at the door. People keep coming to the door for food you know!'



9. Take further action on Being an Inclusive Church

Intentionality about Being Inclusive

Being an Inclusive Church is about maintaining a transparent agenda for all to see and contribute to. So the ultimate goal must be for there to be true inclusion at all levels of the church community, to ensure that everyone's voice is heard. Therefore it is important to provide opportunities for the church body to talk and share their feelings about how progress is being made. Achieving the status of a truly inclusive Church will take time and intentional dedication. It cannot be achieved quickly or simply.

Please find below some action points to assist you in creating greater inclusivity and outreach to different ethnic minority communities. You may be doing some of these action points already while others may be new to you.

Action points for greater inclusion:

- † Consider ways that increase the opportunities for people from different ethnic backgrounds in the parish or diocese to worship, meet and undertake activities together.
- † If Mass is also celebrated in other languages e.g. Filipino, Polish or Portuguese, are there also times when the different communities are able to come together to meet? For example at the English or International Mass, during refreshments following Mass, in various small groups and societies or through other parish activities.
- † Encourage people from different ethnic minority communities to participate in the various roles undertaken by the laity, including the Parish Council.
- † When selections or elections arise for lay roles, try to ensure that the whole community feel able to join the selection process, and make it as open and transparent as possible.
- † Consider the timing of church meetings to ensure that all have equal access to join them.
- † Empower people from the various ethnicities to express their ideas and be open in approach to consider new ideas that might be a bit different to what is familiar.
- † Work towards ensuring that all the voices in the church community are heard and that news of developing work is cascaded out to the entire community.





To be an Inclusive Church we need to invite others to participate at all levels

Do we try to encourage and invite people from different ethnic backgrounds in the church to be involved in the weekly, monthly, annual and other rotas for different roles for example as:

- † Altar servers
- † Choir members
- † Eucharistic ministers
- † Offertory gift bearers
- † Parish Council members
- † Providing the flowers or the setting up of the worship area
- † Readers
- † Servers of refreshments after the service
- † Stewards and welcome stewards

Creating a culture of welcome and hospitality to all - on the initial stages when meeting new people

- † A smile, a 'hello' and 'how are you' are all important in making others feel welcome.
- † Introduce yourself and invite a new person to give their name too. Learn the new name.
- † Speak and discuss some topics of conversation of interest to you both.
- † Speak about the church community, who the priest, deacon and lay people are and offer to make introductions to them.
- † If your church has a calendar of events or a preaching plan offer to get a copy for them and invite them to go to some of the events with you.
- † Remember the first conversation you had with the new person and hold it in your prayers.

Racial Justice Sunday 2012

- † Make sure you deliberately look out for them in the following weeks.
- † Set up a monthly shared meal, inviting people from different ethnicities to cook on a rota.
- † Have a competition in the Church for the most words which mean welcome in the different languages, and record these on a poster board, which can be displayed on the wall.
- † Create an 'Our Parish' poster board with a map of the world on it. Invite people to contribute a photo and name. Place these on the map in the area of the world they originate from or have connections to. Display the board to celebrate the ethnic diversity of the parish.
- † Suggest a study group to explore the meaning and value of welcome and hospitality and possible further action to make new people feel welcome following an initial meeting.
- † Suggest activities that transcend language barriers such as sport or computer games.
- † Talk with your new friends to find out what activities in the parish would support them, e.g. a cultural evening, homework club, a night out together.
- † Remember to hold all of your exchanges and actions within the context of Christian values.

Working as a small group to promote Being an Inclusive Church

It may be easier to work as a small group within a parish or diocese to take forward the Inclusive Church agenda, meeting to discuss ideas and plan activities. This could be linked to your Justice and Peace activities. This way of working may allow for an open exchange of ideas, learning and growing together. It will be important however for a group to remain sufficiently outward looking, to always be open to new members becoming involved.

Background on Being an Inclusive Church ...not an exclusive club



10. Feedback form

The purpose of the feedback is to assist us in developing materials for Racial Justice Sunday in 2013.

The Racial Justice Sunday materials provide resources, suggestions and stories for worship and other activities to be used on Racial Justice Sunday (9 September 2012) or any Sunday in the year. This year's materials are available online and can be downloaded via the CARJ website. Each year the materials developed are intended to be adaptable and user-friendly for Churches across the United Kingdom.

We would greatly appreciate and value your comments on how useful these materials have been.

I have used the Racial Justice Sunday (2012) materials and I have found it to be:

- Very helpful and relevant
- Helpful and relevant
- Not helpful and relevant

How user-friendly was the Racial Justice Sunday (2012) material?

- Very user-friendly
- Reasonably user-friendly
- Not use-friendly

What in the materials have you found most helpful?



What in the materials have you found least helpful?

What suggestions do you have for improving the materials for 2013?

What would you suggest as a theme for Racial Justice Sunday 2013?

Would you prefer to access the RJ Sunday materials in 2013 online?

Yes No Not sure

Additional comments:

Please return your comments to:
Racial Justice Sunday 2012
CARJ, 9 Henry Road, London N4 2LH

For information about our activities and available resources, Please visit our
website www.carj.org.uk Email: info@carj.org.uk

One Race the Human Race

Thank you.



11. ORDER FORM

For additional RJS Packs

Please note that we normally send a 1 RJS pack to every parish, however if you would like additional packs please complete this form and return it to us.

RJS Packs can also be downloaded on-line at www.carj.org.uk

Title _____ Initials _____ Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Telephone _____ Email _____

Parish/Organisation _____

Diocese _____

| Quantity | Items | Donation |
|----------|---|----------|
| | Racial Justice Sunday Pack (includes bible reflection, suggested homily, prayers and hymns, activities for children & young people, A4 poster, feedback form) | |
| | Additional Posters A4 or A3 (please specify) | |

Materials are free of charge however if you would like to send a donation, please send a cheque payable to CARJ.

 **Please return this form to**
Catholic Association for Racial Justice (CARJ)
9 Henry Road
London
N4 2LH

Email: info@carj.org.uk

Tel: 020 8802 8080

Fax: 020 8211 0808

Registered charity number 291601. RJS materials are published by CARJ in partnership with the Churches Racial Justice Network, CTBI.

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Catholic Association for Racial Justice

CARJ tackles racial discrimination within the Church and within society. We work to ensure that racial inequality and the racism that causes it are eradicated. We do this through programmes like:

Racial Justice Sunday – raising awareness of the issues.

Training parish and diocesan groups on racial justice issues

Outreach to ethnic minority communities, including Gypsies and Travellers

Countering Political Extremism working with other Church denominations

Supporting Black and Minority Ethnic **students reach their potential**



To join CARJ or to make a contribution
to the future work of CARJ:
contact CARJ, 9 Henry Road, London N4 2LH
020 8802 8080 info@carj.org.uk www.carj.org.uk
Cheques payable to CARJ
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