

**PARISH OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL AND ST SIMON STOCK
CARMELITE CHURCH 41 KENSINGTON CHURCH STREET LONDON W8 4BB**

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Priests in the Parish: Fr Thaddeus Ekuma ocd, Fr Matt Blake ocd,
Fr John McGowan ocd, Fr Tijo Xavier ocd, Fr Theophilus Nyamali, ocd

**Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Racial Justice Sunday)
31st January 2021**

Today we are invited to reflect on the important issue of racial justice in our world. As Christians our concern for justice stems from Christ's own mission as He himself declared: *'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour'* (Lk 4:18). Moreover, our common identity as children to God (a fact from creation) compels us to see each other as brothers and sisters. The situation that in our world some people, particularly because of their race or colour, are treated or regarded as less than what they truly are, calls for our action to address that injustice.

'A Time to Act' is the theme of this racial justice Sunday. It is indeed time to act. As Pope Francis noted in his reflection, *"instances of racism continue to shame us, for they show that our supposed social progress is not as real or definitive as we think."* The events of the past year, especially the killing of George Floyd, call on all of us to search our hearts and to take proactive steps towards addressing the structures of inequality around us, to include those who are excluded and promote the dignity of every person.

In our Gospel today we hear of Jesus casting out an unclean spirit from a man who was possessed. Although we are not told the content of Jesus's sermon in the Synagogue on that day, it seems to have unsettled the unclean spirits who held the man in bondage. The unclean spirits recognized the authority and power in Jesus's words and became afraid of being destroyed. Jesus cast out the unclean spirits in order to free the man from his shackles of oppression and to restore him to the community where he rightly belonged.

Can we ourselves become Jesus's disciples who, working with His authority and power, proactively strive to destroy the shackles of oppression that minorities in our communities wear? Jesus invites us, in the words of the Psalmist, to 'listen to his voice and not to harden our hearts.' He wants us to join him in speaking out against injustices of any kind and to ensure that wherever we live and work as Christians that we stand up for those who are unfairly treated. Not only should we speak out, we should also be seen to *welcome, protect, promote and integrate* those who are racial minorities in our communities and in our church.

God loves us all equally and it is His design to institute diversity in the world. It is a mark of the beauty of creation and not merely an accident. Diversity and differences in colour are to be celebrated and not shunned. The call to listen to each other, irrespective of where we come from, resounds ever more insistently in our world. Let us, like Jesus, become the voices of those who are excluded from the society and, as disciples of Jesus, become the source of integration and God's love for all people.

Resources to help us reflect on the need for racial justice can be found on the website of the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales. Of particular interest is a video by Fr Richard Nesbitt of Our Lady of Fatima, White City.

The video can be found by following this link: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/events/racial-justice-sunday-2021/catholic-parish-discussion-on-racial-justice/>

See also a message from Bishop Paul McAlenan on racial justice: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/events/racial-justice-sunday-2021/bishops-message-for-racial-justice-sunday-2021/>

as well as a video reflection produced by a diverse group of young adults from across England and Wales who belong to the Zimbabwean Catholic Community: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/events/racial-justice-sunday-2021/zimbabwean-catholic-youth-on-racial-justice/>

NOTICES

Church Opening

Our church remains open for prayer and common worship at the usual times. We continue to do everything possible to make this church safe for everyone that comes here in order to provide spiritual support to everyone that needs it at these critical times.

Greater Precaution because of COVID-19 New Variants

We urge everyone that comes to our church to exercise greater precaution and observe our safety protocols in the church especially at this time. **Wear a facemask before entering the church, sanitize your hands by the entrance, and sit only on the marked spaces. Maintain at least 2m distance at all times while in the church.** Be assured the church is carefully sanitized and disinfected after every use.

Donations using Credit Cards

As part of our measures to prevent the possibility of infections in our church, it is now possible to make donations and offering through bank cards. Two payment stations are installed at the back of the church and are meant to reduce the need to handle cash.

Talks on Mark's Gospel by Fr Matt Blake

Two more Wednesdays left on the series of talks by Fr Matt on Mark's Gospel: February 3rd and 10th. Each talk is livestream at 10.00am and repeated at 8.00pm on our website www.carmelitechurch.org and YouTube 'Kensington Carmelite Church.' Previous talks can be accessed on YouTube.

Preparations for Confirmation

We are still accepting those who wish to register to prepare for Confirmation. Classes begin soon by Zoom. You can register your child by contacting the parish or sending an email to enquiry@carmelitechurch.org

<u>Collections Last Sunday</u>	Offering	£711
	Gift Aid	£53
	Mass of Santo Niño	£1477

Thank you for your generosity

Fr. Thaddeus, OCD