

Reflection

In our main Bible reading this week (Mark 6;1-6), Jesus is not accepted in his local community. Our world is full of people who face hostility from others for all sorts of reasons. For some this is because they are refugees, for others it is because of the colour of their skin. This week, people crossing the English Channel to seek safety and a new life in the UK have been in the news. Meanwhile, the issue of racial injustice remains no less important for our life together. Here are 2 prayers from the Christian development agency Tearfund (www.tearfund.org.uk), which address these two massive, current justice issues:-

God of love,

You are the God who takes the side of the oppressed.

You are the God who is close to the broken-hearted.

You are the God who raises high the humble.

We pray for refugees around the world.

May they be welcomed with open arms.

May their needs for food, shelter, clothing and love be met.

May their wounds – emotional and physical – be healed.

We pray that the world will hear their plight.

We pray that the world will have compassion.

We pray that the world will take action on their behalf.

In Jesus' name, amen."

'He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing.' (Deuteronomy 10:18)

"Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed.

God of justice.

Open the eyes of those who wield the destructiveness power of racism. Let justice roll like a river and move us to repentance and transformation. Convict the hearts of leaders in government, businesses, charities and the church, towards your kingdom values. May righteousness flow like a mighty stream.

God of justice, hear our prayer.

Christ who lived under occupation. Help us identify and change the systems and power structures in our countries that perpetuate racial inequality. Teach us to transform into societies that uphold the dignity of each person, made in your image. Where we need to be stirred, wake us up to take our part in praying, speaking up and taking action. Christ who lived under occupation, hear our prayer.

Spirit of God, our breath in this world.

Let this moment in history bring about everlasting change to violence and discrimination based on the colour of someone's skin. Breathe newness into our lands, our systems, our structures, our ways of living with one another.

Spirit of God, our breath in this world, hear our prayer.

God of restored relationships, to whom we all belong. Bring healing to all those that are suffering and have endured the pain caused by racial injustice. Restore broken relationships, bring peace; your peace and wholeness to all people in all places.

God of restored relationships, to whom we all belong, hear our prayer. Amen.