

St Peter's, Ealing

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Third Sunday before Lent YrC – Racial Justice Sunday

What has it got to do with me?

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There are many things in this world I do not understand. I may not have studied them (astrophysics); I may not have seen them (plate tectonics); I may not have experienced them (the thrill of snowboarding).

If I explore I can have new experiences through which I can learn. That can be exciting. It can also be painful. Sometimes I can never fully understand.

Racism is one of those things. I am white, male and middleclass. I cannot begin to understand what anyone of a different culture from me experiences. I have seen it; I have shared it with some members of my last congregation – and it was painful.

There are occasions in scripture when Jesus is prejudiced against, ridiculed for his faith or his race (soldiers at his arrest). He is criticised by those who did not understand him and he is driven away or threatened with incarceration (family coming to take him home).

Jesus only responded with openness and love, challenging injustice and misunderstanding, pointing continually to the way of God.

We might be tempted to ask what has racial justice to do with me? Jesus would answer, it has everything to do with you. In our faith we are told to love our neighbour as ourselves. That does not mean loving only those who you like or who are like you. It means recognising prejudice within ourselves and dealing with it; identifying it and calling it out, asking God to help us deal with it on a daily basis.

Our place is to promote the love of God in every corner of life, rooting out all injustices. On this Racial Justice Sunday we are asked to remember the '3 Rs':

1. Remembering: Remembering the importance of racial justice in a world broken by prejudice and injustice of which we are a part and yet can be part of the solution
2. Reflection. Reflecting on the wonder of human diversity, celebrating all that is part of God's creation and thanking God for it
3. Responding. Responding to these injustices by working to end the injustice of racism in whatever small or large way we can, confronting ignorance through our prayer life and creative action.

In our Gospel today Jesus reads out his commission; to bring good news to the poor, release to the captives, sight to the blind and freedom to the oppressed. That is the commission laid upon all Christians, even us – so racial justice has everything to do with you.