

SECTION E RESOURCES, PRAYERS AND POEMS FOR JUSTICE

We invite you to send in additional resources as you come across or prepare them.

See also Section C: Process for Group Discussion & Theological Reflection

Worship Resources for Social Justice Sunday

Prepared by **National Council of Churches in Australia** Secretariat Staff for The Social Justice Network (2011)

http://www.ncca.org.au/files/social_justice/Worship_Resources_Social_Justice_Sunday_25_September_2011.pdf

Social Justice Prayers and Liturgy

Prepared by the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (2011)

<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/CONTENT/PDF/2011%20Social%20Justice%20Sunday%20Liturgy%20Notes%20final.pdf>

Making It Right

We want them to be responsible,
So we take away all responsibilities.

We want them to be positive and constructive,
So we degrade them and make them useless.

We want them to be non-violent,
So we put them where there is violence all around them.

We want them to be kind and loving people,
So we subject them to hatred and cruelty.

We want them to quit being the tough guy,
So we put them where the tough guy's respected.

We want them to quit hanging around losers,
So we put all the losers under one roof.

We want them to quit exploiting us,
So we put them where they exploit each other.

We want them to understand justice,
So we deny them justice.

We want them to take control of their lives,
So we make them totally dependent.

Retired Judge Dennis A. Challeen USA reprinted from The Cadell Courier

Solitary Confinement

Robert Walker

(Died 4.30 – 5.00am Tuesday 28th August 1984 in Fremantle State Prison. Aged 25)

Have you ever been ordered to strip
Before half a dozen barking eyes
Forcing you against a wall –
Ordering you to part your legs and bend over?

Have you ever had a door slammed
Locking you out of the world,
Propelling you into timeless space –
To the emptiness of silence?

Have you ever laid on a wooden bed –
In regulation pyjamas,
And tried to get a bucket to talk –
In all seriousness?

Have you ever begged for blankets
From an eye staring through a hole in the door
Rubbing at the cold air digging into your flesh-
Biting down on your bottom lip, while mouthing “Please”?

Have you ever heard screams in the middle of the night
Or the sobbings of a stir- crazy prisoner,
Echo over and over again in the darkness –
Threatening to draw you into madness?

Have you ever rolled up into a human ball
And prayed for sleep to come?
Have you ever laid awake for hours
Waiting for morning to mark another day of being alone?

If you have never experiences even one of these,
Then bow your head and thank God.
For it’s a strange thing indeed.
This rehabilitation system!

From *Prisons - The Last Resort*
[http://www.ncca.org.au/files/Departments/SJS_1988 -
_Prison_the_Last_Resort_Part1.pdf](http://www.ncca.org.au/files/Departments/SJS_1988_-_Prison_the_Last_Resort_Part1.pdf)

Prayer for the journey of healing

Almighty and loving God,
you, who created ALL people in your image,
lead us to seek your compassion
as we listen to the stories of our past.

You gave your only Son, Jesus,
who died and rose again so that sins will be forgiven.
We place before you the pain and anguish
of dispossession of land, language, lore,
culture and family kinship
that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
have experienced.
We live in faith that all people
will rise from the depths of despair and hopelessness.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
have endured the pain and loss of loved ones,
through the separation of children from their families.

We are sorry and ask God's forgiveness,
touch the hearts of the broken, homeless
and afflicted and heal their spirits,
in your mercy and compassion
walk with us as we continue our journey of healing
to create a future that is just and equitable.
Lord, you are our hope
Amen

*National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission of the
National Council of Churches in Australia, 2003*

Prayer of St Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace
where there is hatred, let me sow love:
where there is injury, pardon:
where there is doubt, faith:
where there is darkness, light:
where there is despair, hope,
and where there is sadness joy.

Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and in dying that we are born to eternal life.

An initiative of SA Council of Churches Committee for Christian World Service and made possible through funding from
the Norman Percy Cole Foundation (November 2012)

South Australian Council of Churches, 65 Flinders Street, Adelaide SA 5000
E: sacc@picknowl.com.au | Ph: 8215 0300 | Fax: 8215 0366 | www.sacc.asn.au

I believe in a Father

who so loves his children
to wait in silence for their return
in order to give them the best robe,
kill the fatted calf
and celebrate the feast of reconciliation.

I believe in a Spirit

whose power is not revealed in the thunder of the gale
nor in the dread of the earthquake
but in the still, small voice.

I believe in a Son

who broke the power of Silence
with the piercing cry,
“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
Dying on the cross
he transformed the silence of death
into the death of every silence.

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/prayer-cycle/week-8-italy-malta-portugal-spain.html>

Our Father ...who always stands with the weak, the powerless, the poor, the abandoned, the sick, the aged, the very young, the unborn, and those who, by victim of circumstance, bear the heat of the day

who are in heaven ...where everything will be reversed, where the first will be last and the last will be first, but where all will be well and every manner of being will be well

hallowed be your name ...may we always acknowledge your holiness, respecting that your ways are not our ways, your standards are not our standards. May the reverence we give your name pull us out of the selfishness that prevents us from seeing the pain of our neighbour

Your kingdom come ...help us to create a world where, beyond our own needs and hurts, we will do justice, love tenderly, and walk humbly with you and each other

Your will be done ...open our freedom to let you in so that the complete mutuality that characterises your life might flow through our veins and thus the life that we help generate may radiate your equal love for all and your special love for the poor

on earth as in heaven ...may the work of our hands, the temples and structures we build in this world, reflect the temple and the structure of your glory so that the joy, graciousness, tenderness, and justice of heaven will show forth within all of our structure on earth

Give ...life and love to us and help us to see always everything as gift. Help us to know that nothing comes to us by right and that we must give because we have been given to. Help us realize that we must give to the poor, not because they need it, but because our own health and the health of the other are deeply connected

us ...the truly plural us. Give not just to our own but to everyone, including those who are very different than the narrow us. Give your gifts to all of us equally

An initiative of SA Council of Churches Committee for Christian World Service and made possible through funding from the Norman Percy Cole Foundation (November 2012)

South Australian Council of Churches, 65 Flinders Street, Adelaide SA 5000
E: sacc@picknowl.com.au | Ph: 8215 0300 | Fax: 8215 0366 | www.sacc.asn.au

this day ...not tomorrow. Do not let us push things off into some indefinite future so that we can continue to live justified lives in the face of injustice because we can make good excuses for our inactivity

our daily bread ...so that each person in the world may have enough food, enough clean water, enough clean air, adequate health care, and sufficient access to education so as to have the sustenance for a healthy life. Teach us to give from our sustenance and not just from our surplus

and forgive us our trespasses ... forgive us our blindness towards our neighbour, our self-preoccupation, our racism, our sexism, and our incurable propensity to worry only about ourselves and our own. Forgive us our capacity to watch the evening news and do nothing about it

as we forgive those who trespass against us ...help us to forgive those who victimize us. Help us to mellow out in spirit, to not grow bitter with age, to forgive the imperfect parents and systems that wounded, cursed, and ignored us

and do not put us to the test ...do not judge us only by whether we have fed the hungry, given clothing to the naked, visited the sick, or tried to mend the systems that victimized the poor. Spare us this test for none of us can stand before your gospel scrutiny. Give us, instead, more days to mend our ways, our selfishness, and our systems

but deliver us from evil ...that is, from the blindness that lets us continue to participate in anonymous systems within which we need not see who gets less as we get more. **Amen.**

Prayers from Mission Prayer Handbooks, Uniting Church in Australia

What Strange Good News

The good news was proclaimed after John was arrested.

The good news was proclaimed after John was in prison.

The good news was proclaimed when John was executed.

What strange good news.

The good news was proclaimed after Aung Sun Sui Kyi was arrested.

The good news was proclaimed while Nelson Mandela was in prison.

The good news was proclaimed when Dietrich Bonhoeffer was executed.

What strange good news.

What good news can withstand evil?

What good news can overcome racism?

What good news can undermine oppression?

St Mark says that it's the sort of good news that draws people to follow.

It's the good news that heals the body and the mind.

It's the good news which lifts the person paralysed by fear and pain.

It's the good news that says we are loved just as we are now.

God of hope, fill us with the joy and peace of belief, which is good news.

1998

Temptation

Lord God,

There are the values of our society,

An initiative of SA Council of Churches Committee for Christian World Service and made possible through funding from the Norman Percy Cole Foundation (November 2012)

South Australian Council of Churches, 65 Flinders Street, Adelaide SA 5000

E: sacc@picknowl.com.au | Ph: 8215 0300 | Fax: 8215 0366 | www.sacc.asn.au

mixed,
good and bad,
so often selfish;
And there are the values of your kingdom
that come to us fresh and strong
from the words of Jesus Christ.
We know each day
the pressure to conform,
to accept life others make for us.
to settle for the lesser and easier way.
We know
the quiet insistence of the values of the kingdom.
the way of Jesus Christ.
and we are drawn both ways.

**Lead us not into temptation
and deliver us from evil.**

Deliver us from the fears and faithlessness of our own hearts,
Enable us to believe in you;
Make us in all things more than conquerors through him who loved us.
Teach us Lord, that in our obedience to you
demands will be made upon us
that seem to be beyond our strength.

**Lead us not into temptation
And deliver us from evil.**

There is the hard decision,
the one vital issue,
the real responsibility,
And we do not want to face it.
It seems to us too much.
It is where the battle is most difficult.
We know it will test us,
Let us not be overcome by evil,
Let us not die
nor courage fail,
And give us faith that we may obey.

**Lead us not into temptation
And deliver us from evil.**

**Assure us that neither life nor death can separate us
from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Despair that Gives Hope

Lord, if you are with us, if your divine life touches us, it is enough

*Stand with us, Lord
with those who are beaten by life and find no meaning
with those who are exploited by people and find no justice
with those who are ignored by neighbours and find no friend
with those who are broken on the wheel of history and find no hope.
Stand with us, Lord, when our heavens are empty. Stand with us, and with all people
at the end of this day
at the end of this life
at the end of time.
Stand with us, Lord, that sharing in your agony we may know too your joy,
and become ourselves possessed by your divine light, life, love.*

1986

Jesus, You Inspire us

Jesus,
in this greyness
you inspire us to colour.

in this despair,
you inspire us to hope.

in this inhumanity,
you inspire us to love.

in this deceit,
you inspire us to integrity.

in this consumerism,
you inspire us to value.

**Because you live with us in this world
you know our boredom, despair,
oppression and deception,
our confusion.**

Inspire us Christ
**to live your way
to choose your values
to oppose our oppressors
to value ourselves.**

As you do.

1985