

ACT NOW: Unite to End Racism

- A Litany by Bishop Adam J. Richardson, 115 -

Leader: In the beginning, God created humanity — in varying hues of skin tone, hair textures and blood types — not by race; it doesn't exist, at least not scientifically. It is a human invention. Yet, racism has permeated society and culture, generation after generation. Law Professor Derrick Bell despaired to write that "racism is an integral, permanent, and indestructible component of this society." He was right at the time. For our collective future, however, we must respectfully prove him wrong. Act now: Unite to End Racism.

People: **Scripture exhorts, and so we affirm, "God has given life and breath to all, and has made of one blood all peoples of the earth."** (Acts 17:25, 26)

Leader: Over the course of a few centuries of human history, some labeled their bigotry as biblical truth, their prejudice as science, their racism as scholarship to justify subjugation, discrimination, and the enslavement of other human beings. They first had to deny the humanity of the subjugated. Today, we must first acknowledge the sin in order to get past it; we must face it to fix it. Act now: Unite to End Racism.

People: **Scripture exhorts, and so we affirm, "God has given life and breath to all, and has made of one blood all peoples of the earth."**

Leader: Racism has done so much to harm so many. A pernicious strategy and a tool of those in power, and those who benefited from racist policies, racism has been the cause of death for thousands and thousands. It has been the impetus for intentional genocide. It has undermined the essential dignity of the masses. It is the reason for the abortion of optimism in black, brown and poor communities — and others — in which "hope unborn had died." It is the culprit of dashed aspirations, and dreams deferred. Shame to individuals and institutions who have been complicit. Yet, redemption is possible. On the 50th anniversary of the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we are reminded of a hope to build a "community of humanity." Act now: Unite to End Racism.

People: **Scripture exhorts, and so we affirm, "God has given life and breath to all, and has made of one blood all peoples of the earth."**

Leader: Repentance follows confession. It requires an action of "no more." Racism is a choice. We choose, therefore, to lose the vocabulary attendant to bigotry: racial epithets, slurs and derogatory speech — not just because they are politically incorrect, but because they are hurtful, mean and dehumanizing. We choose to tear down the legal and social structures built on racial exclusion, instead to build systems of opportunity and possibility for all. Act now: Unite to End Racism.

People: **Today, we stand together— as brothers and sisters — walking upright, speaking forthrightly to affirm our common humanity, where character is more crucial than the color of our skin. We stand united to renounce racism as despicably evil and a deplorable hindrance to human progress. As it was in the beginning, we affirm equality for every human being, for Scripture exhorts, and so we affirm, "God has given life and breath to all, and has made of one blood all peoples of the earth." Act now: Unite to End Racism!**