



**We are
Called**

TO HEAL. TO UNITE. TO JUSTICE.

REFLECTION

Advocating Change to End Health Disparities and Systemic Racism

Scripture: Mark 7:24-27

A reading from the Gospel of Mark

Jesus said, "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and follows them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not follow them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

Reflection:

Jesus was a carpenter and knew the importance of a firm foundation. If the foundation is shaky, the whole structure is at risk. Our shared anti-racism work and efforts to end health disparities require us to advocate for a system with a strong foundation on justice and equity. Policies around education, housing, nutrition, criminal justice reform and the environment must enable every man, woman and child in our society to flourish.

The call to advocacy is a call to create lasting change in the political arena. The values we profess in our hallways, chapels, conference rooms, must find a home in our government chambers and offices. Catholic social tradition affirms the government's role in ensuring the conditions for citizens to flourish and requires that people of faith stay engaged, promoting justice and advocating for the common good.

Pope Francis reminds us, and we must remind our elected officials and policymakers, "The dignity of each human person and the pursuit of the common good are concerns which ought to shape all economic policies." *Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life)*.

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Our charity care, free clinics, mobile health units and community benefit programs all meet the current needs, but advocating for a firm foundation can stop cycles of disease and poverty for all. Using the common good as our cornerstone and human dignity as our measuring stick, together with people of goodwill, we can make lasting changes in our world.

Intercessions:

The response to our intercessions is, **Hear us, God.**

That policymakers, political leaders and elected officials center their service on the twin values of human dignity and the common good. We pray, **Hear us, God.**

That all people of faith become active citizens and bring the justice, peace and equality taught by the word's spiritual traditions. We pray, **Hear us, God.**

That advocates for the common good find meaning and joy in their work to sustain them through the challenges. We pray, **Hear us, God.**

Closing Prayer:

God of the Margins,

Inspire us to be faithful citizens and strong advocates for policies and leaders which respect human dignity and prioritize the common good.

God of Eternity,

In this life, you were poor, vulnerable and marginalized. Today you continue to live among us in those who are poor, vulnerable and marginalized. Strengthen our resolve to be advocates for others and our faith, that by doing so, we advocate for you.

Help us face the realities of health disparities displayed by the global pandemic with tenderness for those impacted and a commitment to move beyond the status quo. May your words and example be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.

Amen.