

A Powerful Lenten Series

["Seeking God's Justice for All"](#) is the third part of an ongoing Lifelong Faith Formation resource from The Episcopal Church to support their repudiation and renouncing the "Doctrine of Discovery," a set of legal and ecclesiastical documents and policies which gave the full blessing and sanction of the Church to the colonizing dispossession (genocide) of the Indigenous peoples and lands of the Americas.

Lent has traditionally been a time for repentance and amendment of life, a time for preparing those who are new to the Church for Baptism, for restoring those who have been away from the church and are returning, and a more general call to all who follow Jesus for renewal of faith and deepening of (personal/ individual) spiritual life and practice.

The series, "Exposing the Doctrine of Discovery" is a direct response to Resolution DO35 from General Convention 2009 by which the Episcopal Church repudiated the genocide and colonization of Native people authorized by various papal bulls, royal letters, and legal principles such as the Doctrine of Discovery, Jamestown Charter of 1607, and Manifest Destiny.

The gift of using Lent 2012 as a time for repentance, lamentation and transformation is that we are called into a powerful experience of the many sides of sin and grace. "We" (all of us across the whole range of God's people) learn, see, feel, think and pray about both our experiences of falling short of God's call to us, as well as come to know intimately the pain of suffering and distress to which the Cross of Jesus so powerfully responds. Used wisely, these days of prayer, reflection, spiritual discipline, study, communal gathering and worship offer a rare opportunity for learning and transformation that we cannot accomplish on our own. For only in communities that practice both lamentation and repentance are we able to witness, be party to, and benefit from the gift of transforming healing that takes place in the "sacred circle that is" the Body of Christ.

In a spirit and practice of "self-determination" for all people, one of the most widespread characteristics among various Indigenous communities of North America, this series seeks to provide tools with which various congregations and the individuals in them are equipped spiritually, theologically, and ethically to work together with other communities using practices of respectful collaboration.

Neither Indigenous nor other peoples are going to prescribe how other people should

respond to the Doctrine of Discovery. Rather, formed by a deep sense of the “dignity of every human being” our interactions and efforts around these complicated matters will be marked by the spiritually informed practices of:

- Listening
- Presence
- Witness
- Respectful Collaboration
- Conciliation

Those, who use this series as part of their Lenten disciplines, are making an important transition from Lent as a private spiritual practice, to a more communal experience of applied Christian faith. As we connect our individual spiritual lives and desires for reconciliation with God, with the desires for healing and hope of Indigenous peoples we participate in the Body of Christ. Through the five weeks of the series, the particular questions and participation of individuals in one congregation become woven together, at least in the Spirit, with many other individuals and congregations across the nation.

This series is a continuation of three earlier resources:

- [“Exposing the Doctrine of Discovery”](#)
- A Leader's Guide [“Columbus Day Through the Lens of our Baptismal Vows”](#)
- [“The Four Directions and Magnificat”](#) Advent Series

When our dealings become marked most by the depth of our listening, capacity for being present with others as they are, and respect for the ways of others, then we may be moving towards God's justice for all people.

This article is taken directly from portions of “Seeking God's Justice for All.”