

Covid-19 Liturgy of Repentance. From Chris Hall, President of Renovare

I sense the Lord speaking. He is calling us to repentance. *The Holy Trinity calls to me, to the Renovaré community, and to the white Christians of our nation.* We bow the knee. We make no excuses. We name our sin as specifically as possible. We ask for grace for genuine repentance. And we pray: “Lord, have mercy.”

- We have refused to listen attentively to our black and brown brothers’ and sisters’ cry for justice. **Lord, have mercy.**
- We have been deaf to the prophet’s call: “And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.” (Isaiah 5:7b). **Lord, have mercy.**
- We have been intellectually lazy and morally obtuse. Our minds and hearts listen only to voices that reinforce opinions we already hold. **Lord, have mercy.**
- We have been blind to our complacency and complicity. **Lord, have mercy.**
- We have caricatured or ignored books, poems, art, and films that challenge our prejudice and rebuke our ignorance. **Lord, have mercy.**
- We have been complicit in a culture that delights in falsehood and disregards the truth. **Lord, have mercy.**
- We have expected applause for our feeble thoughts and tottering steps toward your precious image bearers who daily experience the hatred and violence of racism. **Lord, have mercy.**
- We have been self-absorbed and self-deceived. **Lord, have mercy.**
- We have preferred teaching rather than being taught. **Lord, have mercy.**
- We have manipulated and exploited. **Lord, have mercy.**
- We have feared losing our “rights,” while withholding rights from the genuinely oppressed and desperate. **Lord, have mercy.**
- We have lacked steady compassion and sturdy courage. Our response to the evil of racism has been short-lived and shallow. **Lord, have mercy.**
- We have loved the big deal and shunned hidden service. **Lord, have mercy.**
- We have hated our enemies and loved those who love us. **Lord, have mercy.**
- We have equated the United States of America with the kingdom of God. **Lord, have mercy.**

- We have embraced power and ignored the demands of love. **Lord, have mercy.**
- We have delighted in cultural conflict and disdained the pursuit of peace and understanding. **Lord, have mercy.**
- We have walled out the alien and the foreigner. **Lord, have mercy.**
- We have enacted unjust and oppressive laws. **Lord, have mercy.**
- We have incarcerated the poor and released the rich and powerful. **Lord, have mercy.**
- We have gladly travelled the wide and easy road that leads to destruction and avoided the narrow road that leads to life. **Lord, have mercy.**

*Oh, Lord, we have sinned,
against you and against our neighbor,
in the things we have done, and the things we have left undone.
We acknowledge our ignorance and willful neglect.*

*Forgive us. Cleanse us. Renew us.
Reset our moral compass.
Fill the wind of our sails with the breath of your Spirit.
Propel us to the places and people who can teach us to love in new and unexpected ways.*

*We plead for deeper courage and compassion.
We ask for a quiet, teachable spirit.*

*Give us love and humility to erase the boundary lines we drew in fear.
Expand our vision to life and flourishing for all – from the unborn to those living on death row.
We invite you, we welcome you, to plant new seeds in the garden of our minds and hearts.*

The Lord is calling us to sacrificial love, a love where the currency of our words is backed by the gold of our lives. We have not yet reached this congruence. Jesus beckons. “Walk with me into a future that seems uncertain to you. It is not to me. I have a much larger pasture for you. Other sheep are waiting for you there. And I promise you, I will always be your Shepherd. Trust me. Be not afraid.”