



## **Seeing people, not things**

Primo Levi, who survived Auschwitz, wrote of his determination

*to recognize always, even in the darkest days, in my companions and in myself, **men, not things**, and thus to avoid that total humiliation and demoralization which led so many to spiritual shipwreck.*

Thinking of and relating to people as things enables us to abuse them. Instead of being people like us they are objects for disposal or disdain, or to be disregarded.

To avoid such demoralization and spiritual shipwreck, which leads inevitably to torture and abuse, we must be ever on our guard, not only in respect of victims of torture but also towards those who perpetrate or facilitate it. There is too much lazy and abstract talk - 'the Americans', 'terrorists', 'consumers'. At the deepest level there are no such things, only people, human beings made in the image of God. People like us who too often fail and indulge egos at the expense of others. People like us, victims, who are not simply 'things', the object of a campaign or cause, but rather men and women in pain, despair and distress to be delivered from abuse and have their dignity restored.

### **DETECTING GOD'S IMAGE**

Help us, Lord, to see your image in both captive and captor, abused and abuser, to recognise in ourselves the times when we have sought power or influence at the expense of another so that we may work to release both the imprisoned and those who imprison them, through Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### **PRAYER INTO ACTION**

Lord you have taught us that what we do or fail to do to for the least of our brothers and sisters we do or fail to do for you. Transform our prayer into action, that liberated from selfish concerns we may achieve the liberty of those who suffer from the selfishness of others for you are alive and reign with the Father in the unity of the Spirit for ever and ever. **Amen**

### **A PRAYER OF REDEDICATION**

Almighty God, in whom we live and move and have our being, who has made us for yourself, so that our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you: we give you thanks for every mercy granted to us in times past, and for your presence with us at this hour. As we seek to rededicate our life and work to you, grant us purity of heart and strength of purpose, that no selfish passion may hinder us from knowing your will, no weakness from doing it; but that in your light we may see light clearly, and in your service find our perfect freedom; through Jesus Christ our Lord who is alive and reigns with you Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

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