What follows is intended to stir the imagination about preaching and the issues of racism and nationalism. It is assumed that the preacher will take into consideration the social teachings of the Church on these issues, especially found in papal and USCCB documents, and the context of the feast or season.

**ADVENT 1**

Isaiah 2: 1-5

Many different peoples will climb the Lord’s mountain. These people will not be those who we find fit for the kingdom, but those God finds fit. Are you willing to walk to the Lord’s house hand in hand with people of any race or nationality or religion? If you aren’t willing to do that here and now, you won’t be ready when the day comes for the kingdom.

Romans 13: 11-4

No provisions for the desires of the flesh. One “desire of the flesh” is to judge people by the color of their flesh.

**ADVENT 2**

Isaiah 11: 1-10

Prejudice leads to oppression. Maybe not so much today with chain and whip, but with blocking people out. When the Lord judges the poor with justice and decides aright for the lands afflicted, will we be among the ruthless who are struck with the rod of His mouth?

Romans 15: 4-9

Endurance... it is easy to try not to be prejudice, but it takes constant practice and vigilance to overcome it. We need to endure in being vigilant about our attitudes, words, and judgments.

Matthew 3: 1-12

The children of Abraham are not so because of race or nationality. They are his children because they live as the Lord calls them to live. How do you imagine the children of Abraham? As a certain race? Color? Nationality?

**IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**

Genesis 3: 9-15, 20

What is it “the serpent” tricks us into believing? That we are better than others because of race or nationality or religion?

**ADVENT 3**

Isaiah 35: 1-6a, 10

“The splendor of God is man fully alive.” (St. Irenaeus) This “alive” occurs in each culture in different ways, and yet is always rooted in a universal love and respect for all other people. Our eyes need to be opened to seeing, as God sees, the value of every person in the context of her/his own culture and background. This may well not look like our own culture and background rooted in our race or ethnic origin.

James 5: 7-10

Patience ... we wait for the day when prejudice will be eliminated as did great people like Martin Luther King, Gandhi, and others. It is not a passive waiting, but one of active preparation of hearts and minds.

**ADVENT 4**

Romans 1: 1-7

Unless we are descendents of Palestinian Jews, the gift of faith was brought to our ancestors by persons of a different race and nationality than theirs. Are we appreciative that someone else crossed the barriers of race and/or nationality to bring us to faith in Jesus Christ? Are we willing to do the same?

**CHRISTMAS**

The virtues of Christmas, which we cherish so deeply – innocence, love, self-giving, unity, peace, are not meant to be boxed up and put in the attic with wreaths, ornaments, and bows. They are meant to be practiced and worked with and worked on every day. Hopefully, by next Christmas they are not worn out but polished and shining brightly from use.

**HOLY**

What in our ethnic cultures supports and encourages the family to be a “little
FAMILY

Church”? What might discourage or destroy it? What do other cultures offer us that we might use?

MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

Gal 4: 4-7

What are the attitudes we hold about the dignity and worth of people different from us which reveal that we are still slaves and not sons and daughters who have inherited the vision given by the Holy Spirit?

EPIPHANY

Eph 3: 2-3a, 5-6

One of the greatest hurdles for the very first Christians (who were Jews) to overcome was that Gentiles were also saved. Yet, they did overcome it, and all of us in the Church are Christian. Are we big enough to set aside our pre-conceptions about others who are different than we are and truly welcome them into our community of faith?

BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Is 42: 1-4, 6-7

To keep imprisoned (whether in a jail or by blocking opportunities due to anyone who can meet them) is unjust. But also the one who imprisons is kept in the darkness of confinement because he/she cannot become whom he/she is meant to be as long as ignorance and suppression of the dignity of all people dominates one’s life.

OT 2

Is 49: 3, 5-6

To be a light to the nations inherently involves being for others who are different than we are. To be a light that is attractive demands that must recognize the goodness of those on whom it is meant to shine. Sometimes the light will reveal an ugliness of sin, but this ugliness is always distinct from the innate dignity of the person. For example, Martin Luther King, Jr. revealed the ugliness of racism, yet upheld the dignity of the racist person, urging him/her to a change of heart.

OT 3

Is 8: 23 – 9:3

The yoke that burdens is not usually physical. It is often the yoke of sin that weighs down our souls. What yoke burdens you, uses up for energy? Could it be hatred, suspicion, denigration, or lack of respect for others of different backgrounds than ours?

OT 4

Mt 5: 1-12a

When one thinks about it, there is not a beatitude that does not affect the just treatment and respect of people, especially in the area of race and nationality. If one thinks about each beatitude in light of relationships with others, one sees how each beatitude impacts this area of our lives.

OT 5

Mt 5: 13-16

What is it with which we season the world by our attitudes towards others? What kind of light do we shine through to others by what we say, do, and think about others different from us.

OT 6

I Cor 2: 6-10

The wisdom of God does not show itself in words or actions that falsely exult ourselves or our race; nor does it show itself in the belittlement of others. Rather, through the Spirit, it cries out the dignity of every person.

Mt 5: 17-20

Do we let prejudicial or racist jokes or stories tear encourage racial elitism to undermine the kingdom of heaven?

OT 7

I Cor 3: 16-23

Do not deceive yourself with a sense of entitlement because you are American, Catholic, white, black, red, yellow, or brown. God does not see the skin, but under the skin.

Mt 5: 38-38

Human love has a rather narrow range of vision. Christian love has a wide range of
vision. Human love is good; but Christian love is better for it draws in a wider spectrum of people to be loved.

**OT 8**
I Cor 4: 15

God will bring to light what is hidden in our hearts. What is in our hearts brings us to judge others. It is the lens by which we see. Is my heart pure enough to judge as God judges and not with human weakness and distortion?

**ASH WEDNESDAY**
Jl 2: 12-18

For Nazis, skinheads, and the Klan, skin color and ethnic origin have become gods. Have these items become demi-gods for us?

**LENT 1**
Mt 4: 1-11

In rending our hearts, may attitudes of hatred, superiority, and arrogance, especially those rooted in racism or nationalism, fall to the ground and be trampled. It may take all of Lent – in fact, all of our lives – to rend our hearts enough to rid ourselves of such attitudes.

**LENT 2**
Gen 12: 1-4a

The devil can quote Scripture! Are there passages of Scripture we use to justify our disdain for people of different races, creeds, or nationalities?

**LENT 3**
Jn 4: 5-42

There are certain families in which you can tell everyone is related because they look or sound alike. Abraham’s vast family is not a genetic one, but one of faith. It is a family in which one recognizes who is related not by color of hair or skin, type of nose or eye shape, but through the fact that all act in a certain way – they act like their Father and their first-born Brother Jesus Christ; they are filled with the same Spirit. Would you or I be recognized as a member of God’s family?

**LENT 4**
JOHN 9: 1-41

The reason John includes the discussion of the true place to worship is to show not who was right or wrong, but that Jesus will bring all people together in worship of the Father by his death and resurrection. If his Paschal Mystery is meant to bring healing to the human family, who are we to continue the rift by our attitudes of arrogance, pride, suspicion of others different from us?

**LENT 5**
Ez 37-12-14

When the Chilean miners where finally brought up to the surface, there was concern that the light would blind them. The rescuers took care to help them to adjust to the light, but the miners did and they see clearly. Lent is a time of adjusting to the light so that we can see the richness of life in its complexity. Racism, prejudice, nationalism, ethno-centrism can keep us buried beneath the earth in darkness and blind to the world above. May we seek to rise to the light.

**PASSION (PALM) SUNDAY**
Phil 2: 6-11

Of what wonders Ezekiel speaks? The dead raised up to life! The spirit that will fill them is no other spirit than that of God’s self. It has no room for hatred or division; it is a Spirit that indeed brings together soul and body, but also soul to soul and body to body in a unity of humanity. How are we acting in accord with the great things God has done for His people?

Jesus came in human appearance. In a historical sense, it was a Jewish appearance; yet in His divinity, Jesus’ appears in the faces of every man and woman in need. His appearance is also in the faces of all who help every man and woman need. Paradoxically, Jesus human appearance was specific to his historical reality and to his universal presence in all he saved.
HOLY THURSDAY
I Cor 11: 23-26
There is definitely something humbling about washing feet, but there is also something humbling about having your feet washed, a sense of dependence upon another. In our American situation, we often look down upon people of other races or nationalities because, in the historical moment, many of other races perform jobs we deem as menial or beneath us. Yet, if these jobs were not done, where would we be? What if we were to see these people with the same human dignity we have, as people we are dependent upon and treat them with the respect, dignity, and gratitude that they deserve.

GOOD FRIDAY
John 18:1- 19:42
In the midst of humiliation and degradation, Christ is enthroned and those who humiliated him are shamed. Do we still humiliate and degrade Him in the persons of different races and ethnicities? Let us remember that we will be shamed if we shame others.

EASTER
Rom 6: 3-11; Col 3: 1-4
Pulled from death to life through the waters of baptism, we are called to a new way of thinking, and that way of thinking is according to what is above where Christ is seated at God's right hand. Lent is meant to lead us to this new way of thinking, but it must continue everyday of our lives. May we think like Christ in our attitude towards others, recognizing their dignity regardless of how different they may be from us on the surface. Otherwise, we have returned to the grave.

EASTER II
I Pt 1: 3-9
Although we have not seen Christ, we love Him. Or have we seen Him? Is he not in the faces of all we meet? Is he not especially in the faces of those who seem least likely to us to be Christ. It is easier to see Christ in our minds than to see him in our neighbor. On the last day, Christ will not ask how we saw him in our minds, but how we recognized him in our neighbor.

EASTER III
I Pt 1: 17-21
We have been ransomed from our futile conduct. What is more futile than the world of illusion? One of our greatest illusions is that somehow we as ________- Americans are the gold-standard by which everyone else will be judged.

EASTER IV
I Pt 2: 20b-25
There are many of us who would rather suffer physically before being humiliated. Yet, Christian witness usually involves the latter more than the former. Are we willing, like Christ, to suffer the humiliation of bearing witness to the dignity and equality of all people, not tolerating the belittlement of races or cultures in jokes or stories?

EASTER V
Acts 6: 1-7
This story reveals that prejudice, real or perceived, is part of the human condition, even for the Spirit-filled Church of Jerusalem. Yet, just because it is a human condition, it is not a healthy one. That early Church addressed the issue straight on. We must do no less in the Church in America in the 21st century.

EASTER VI
Acts 8:5-8, 14-17
What a change the Holy Spirit brings to the hearts of those in whom the Spirit dwells! The apostles, so suspicious of the Samaritans before Pentecost, now go willingly to bestow the Spirit upon them. Was it the Samaritans who changed into better people, or the apostles who changed in their outlook? Do we let the Spirit work on us, in us, and through us to see that all are brothers and sisters in the Lord?

ASCENSION
Mt 28: 16-20
“Go and make disciples of all nations...” Through the ages, this command brought great change to the “culture” of the Church. Bringing Gentiles to the faith in the
early centuries moved the Church from a purely Jewish perspective; when the Huns and Visigoths came into the Church, they brought changes in thought and practice. Are we open to letting other cultures bring their gifts to the Church, to our parish?

**PENTECOST**  
Acts 2: 1-11  
You don’t need *Pentecost for Dummies* to get the point that the gift of the Spirit brings salvation to all people, uniting them in the oneness of the Holy Spirit. And yet, that oneness was brought about not because everyone understood one language, but because the Church spoke in many different languages. Are we willing to speak whatever language needs to be spoken in order to draw people of different races and cultures into the one Body of Christ? Are we willing to let some of our “language” go in order that others may hear?

**HOLY TRINITY**  
II Cor 13: 11-13  
The fellowship of the Holy Spirit is not simply some souped-up sense of *Gemütlichkeit*, a feeling of well-being; it is rather the respect for and total self-giving to others, especially those who are easy to exclude.

**CORPUS CHRISTI**  
I Cor 10: 16-17  
“We, though many, are one body for we all partake of one loaf.” So easy to believe; so hard to live. Yet unless we work for that unity of persons, we are unfaithful to the meal we have eaten and the Lord who feeds us.

**OT 14**  
Mt 11: 25-30  
There are two ways in which a burden can be made light; one is to reduce the load; the second is to strengthen the bearer of the load. Jesus strengthens us to carry his yoke, and part of that yoke is to announce the dignity of every person. Only by practicing this task by word and example do we grow stronger and the yoke becomes easier, lighter.

**OT 15**  
Mt 13: 1-23  
Even people with perfect hearing do not hear some things. There are things we have to learn to listen for, like a mother who learns the different cries of her baby to know whether the baby is hungry, in pain, or just wants to be held. The Gospel is about learning to listen in order to recognize what is the voice of God and what isn’t. Too often, we don’t want to hear the call of God to love all people. We have to learn to listen to what that kind of love entails.

**OT 16**  
Mt 13: 24-43  
“Isms” (racism, nationalism, “creedism”), like yeast in dough, easily spread throughout a community and culture. You cannot pick yeast out of dough, nor can you remove “isms” out of society. Rather, you have to introduce something new into society to change the make-up of the society. What is introduced is the new yeast of divine truth, of new ways of seeing, of new ways of acting. These deflate the old yeast and give rise to something far better.

**OT 17**  
Mt 13: 44-52  
The wicked and the righteous will not be determined simply by who holds to what creed, or who was at Mass on Sunday. The determining factor will be who lived love for God and love for neighbor, recognizing that there is nobody who is “not neighbor.” Mass is not an end in itself, but the nourishment to live in justice and love for all people.

**OT 18**  
Rom 8: 35, 37-39  
The only thing that can separate us from the love of Christ is our own love of sin. It is easy to hate the idea of sin, but we find it difficult to hate sin. We cling to selfishness, pride, prejudice, resentment. All we need to do is surrender these and cling to Christ. It takes a lifetime to do this, but it is worth it.
OT 19
Rom 9: 1-5

In the early Church, Jewish Christians were often suspicious of Gentile Christians, because they were not God’s Chosen People, and Gentile Christians were suspicious of Jewish Christians because most Jews did not accept Christ. Paul, a Jew who loved the Gentiles, never ceased loving those Jews who did not accept Christ; he recognized their inherent dignity as God’s People, and longed for them to see the fulfillment of the prophets in Jesus Christ. It is too easy for us to see the weakness of a few as defining the character of a whole people. May we distinguish as Paul did.

OT 20
Mt 15: 21-28

Is Jesus showing bigotry to this non-Jewish woman or is He using a common attitude to bring about a transformation for his followers. In the face of bigotry, by her persistence, she shows that she has more faith than many in the crowd. Do we see certain cultures as lacking moral character or faith because we do not really know them?

ASSUMPTION
Lk 1: 39-56

The Magnificat, that wonderful proclamation of Mary, is seen as the joyful song of good news. But it is only good news to us if we are not the rich who refuse the poor, the mighty who tromp on the lowly. How do we who have the power and riches we have on so many levels, lift up the oppressed, the poor, and those who count for nothing in the eyes of the world? This is how Mary responded to the Lord. We can afford to do no less if we are to share in the fullness of life with her.

OT 21
Mt 16: 13-20

Why did Christ forbid the disciples to reveal Him as the Christ? Probably because the people’s understanding of the Messiah was one of their own creation and not true. How often in our lives do we make faith in our own image and likeness, discarding the difficult realities that might cost us. For example, do we exclude, consciously or unconsciously those who are not like us, and who might bring change to our parish from being welcomed among us?

OT 22
Rom 12: 1-2

Do not conform yourselves to this age. Sounds easy, but it demands that we always look beyond what is obviously wrong about “this age.” What is it we buy into in our culture without ever examining its validity in the eyes of God. We may be strongly against abortion or sexual promiscuity (and rightly so) but we may treat people in other countries as simply tools for a strong America, and people within our country only as assets or defects for our own ends, and not as people with dignity and value equal to our own.

OT 23
Rom 13: 8-10

It is quite possible to do loving things without love. We can do things simply because we want to go to heaven, because we want the respect of others, or we may do them out of a sense of spiritual arrogance. Do we really strive to love all people. Do we work to overcome attitudes of bigotry and prejudice, or do we just have an outward show.

OT 24
Sir 27: 30 – 28: 7

The forgiving love of God is meant for those who strive to love forgivingly. This is not simply because God said to be this way, but also because we cannot accept the love of God if resentment – vengeance, self-righteousness, bigotry) – is taking up space in our hearts. We are constantly in need of making room for God’s love by loving as God loves.

OT 25
Phil 1: 20c-24,

“Conduct yourselves in a way worthy of the Gospel of Christ.” Inconsistency on our part is the best weapon of our enemy. This is because inconsistency discredits even
the noblest message. Our conduct, our attitudes, our words proclaim the validity of the Gospel much more than theological arguments. Do our actions to others support or discredit the Gospel of universal love of God and neighbor?

**OT 26**

*Mt 21: 28-32*

WE must be careful not to be like the older son who says “yes” but does not follow through. We can attend Mass and say “Amen;” and leave church with hearts filled with animosity, anger, fear, judgment of others. We can be people who say we are followers of Christ and yet we do nothing to bring the dignity of every person to reality.

**OT 27**

*Phil 4: 6-9*

The words of Paul are truly beautiful, but their beauty lies in the cost that one pays to be these things. Those things which are honorable, pure, just, lovely, and gracious are done in our interaction with others; in the right treatment of people, not just those we like or whom are of our culture, race, or creed, but especially in the treatment of those who are not. It is easy to demonstrate these virtues to those with whom we are familiar; it is Christ-like to demonstrate these things with those who are different than we are.

**OT 28**

*Is 25: 6-10a*

The image of the banquet on the Lord’s mountain makes one’s mouth water, but besides the food, one has to consider the company. All peoples are invited, and it is doubtful if there will be an African section, an American section, an Hispanic section, and an Asian section. We could end up sitting forever next to someone you think little of. There are two ways to deal with this. One is to not attend the banquet and eat mediocre food with people just like ourselves; the other is to begin to see the dignity of all people and enjoy a wonderful dinner in the company of great friends.

**OT 29**

*Is 45: 1, 4-6*

God anointed a pagan to be the person to bring Israel together in peace and help them resume living the covenant. God often works that way, not choosing whom we think should be in the club to play a major role in the work of salvation. It is all too easy for us to dismiss those not like us from being in God’s game plan. God doesn’t lose; the other person doesn’t lose. Only we who can’t see deep enough and wide enough lose.

**OT 30**

*Ex 22: 20-26*

From the earliest years of Hebrew faith, outsiders were to be protected and cared for because of their lack of power and rights “in an alien land.” The reason is no less than this: We all are aliens coming into the kingdom of God. Immigrants into a land, or people forced by slavery into a land, are special in the eyes of the Lord. They may well the people we need to speak to the Lord on our behalf. We need to be careful who we shut out.

**OT 31**

*Mal 1: 14b – 2: 2b, 8-10*

The priests were judged as contemptible in the eyes of the Lord because they were partial or prejudiced in their decisions. It is not just the behavior that made them contemptible, but the fact that they did not grasp the reason for impartiality, that is, that ALL HAVE ONE FATHER. Ultimately, there is no difference in people because all are children of the same God.

**ALL SAINTS**

*Rev. 7:2-4, 9-14*

Can you imagine how boring that this rally before God would be if it were filled only with people like us? It would look like a Stepford Believers rally. But because God has called people of every nation, race, people, and tongue, this rally before our God will be rich in color, tune, gesture, and voice, not a cacophony of noise and
a splattering of color, but a symphony of voices and master pieces of God’s art.

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<tr>
<th>OT 32</th>
<th>Mt 25: 1-13</th>
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<td>How often it is that we waste the oil we have to illumine what we think is wrong with people only to find that the shadows have played a trick on us, and when we really need the oil, we come up short. Those who trim their lamps by seeking truth, justice, and the right treatment of others will find they never run out of oil.</td>
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<td>Children of the light and the day are able to see the dignity of a person, not in terms of class, race, or creed, but in terms of inherent dignity of being human with God’s handprint upon him or her. Children of light see deeper than the skin, the hair, the language to the human soul and recognize God in that person.</td>
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CHRIST THE KING

Mt 25: 31-46

“Whatever you did to them, you did to me.” What more needs to be said?