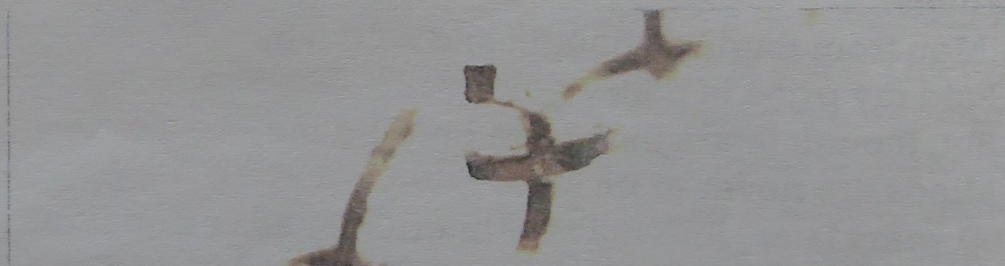
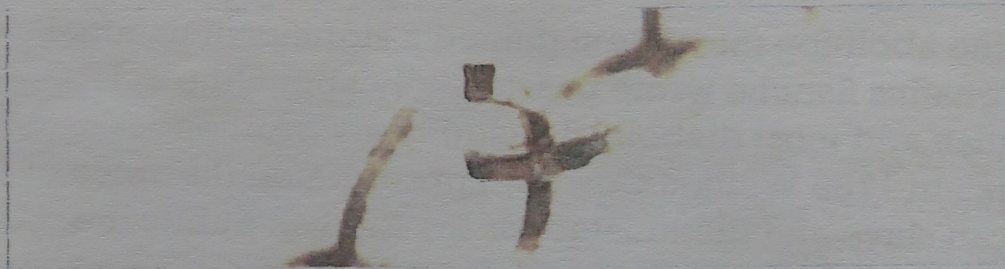
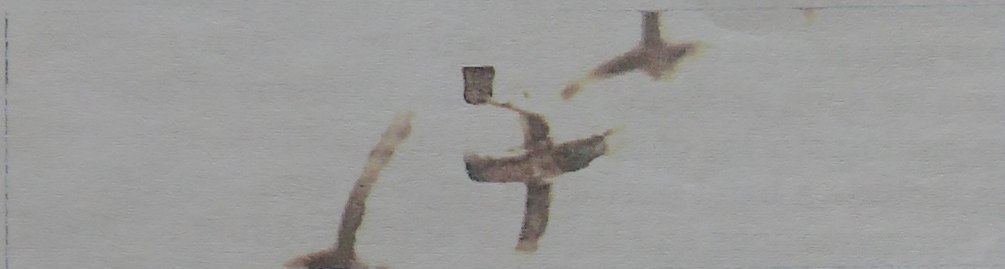


BICENTENARY HEARINGS

REMEMBRANCE - REPENTANCE - RESTORATION



**CHURCH OF ENGLAND
MAKING OUR MARK
LENT 2007**

UNPACKING OUR PURPOSE

The Church of England's Bicentenary Hearings are a challenging and groundbreaking series of conversations. Operating both nationally and intimately, they are invitations to engage in deep dialogue and in dynamic reconsideration of how our past affects our present. It is important to prepare the ground for such profound openness. One way of doing this is by putting stories of enslavement in context. The Hearings include a brief portrait of some of the histories, impacts, consequences and legacies of the ongoing reality of slavery and its indelible mark.

Before the abolition movement gained a significant national voice, Ignatius Sancho wrote passionately about 'the unchristian and most diabolical usage of my brother Negroes'. In 1789 William Cowper appropriated the voice of an African slave and illuminated for the English public the total injustice of humans treating one another as commodities:

'Men from England bought and sold me,
Paid my price in paltry gold;
But, though theirs they have enroll'd me,
Minds are never to be sold.'

Over 200 years later, Anti-Slavery International's campaigns raised national awareness about a recently freed child slave in Uganda who claimed that 'nothing angers me because I've learned to accept the circumstances of life.' Greed and presumed dominance continues to strip millions of people of their rights and dignity every day.

SPACE SET APART

The ground we are on in the course of the Hearings and on our journeys to walk with one another in the spirit of reconciliation, introspection and justice, is truly holy. As we reflect and respond, perhaps it may also be possible to reframe. The history of slavery and the transatlantic trade is a history that affects each of us and, albeit in many different ways, belongs to each of us. History is not linear and cannot escape from the constraints of bias. If we are to 'let justice roll like a river,' our stories are open-ended, our views are simultaneously plural and singular. Difference does not negate similarity. Put simply, 'you can only be truly free if I am free'.

WORDS AND PICTURES

Each Hearing begins with a presentation to set the dialogues in context. The compilations of text and images are intended to set the scene, providing visual and conceptual paths into the complex histories of slavery. It is largely chronological, beginning with a brief overview of Britain's involvement in the slave trade and its legislated abolition in 1807. The roles and responsibilities of the Church of England are highlighted both corporately and personally, and the focus is regional and local where appropriate and possible. It aims to show that the history of slavery is a global history of countless distinct faces and voices, both working with and struggling against numerous institutions.

THANKS

CMEAC, Facilitators, Participants, Museum of London in Docklands, Southwark Cathedral, Bishops, Researchers, HLF

'Tis true that we have not now chains
Yet we were never free,
Still masters chains corrupt our brains
Come children see.
(Benjamin Zephaniah, 'Master')

Today salvation has come to this house.
(Luke 19.10)

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MAKING OUR MARK