

## **Monday after the First Sunday in Lent, February 27, 2023**

Recommended readings: p. 42, "1682," p. 43, "Loving Me," pp. 46-51, "Race" (part one)

In chapter two of "The 1619 Project," author Dorothy Roberts introduces us to a Virginia couple denied a marriage license in 2019; their refusal to answer a question of race on their application violated rules that could be traced back to the state's 1924 Racial Integrity Act. Roberts writes, "The chief promoter of that act, Walter Ashby Plecker ... was a doctor with deep ties to both eugenicists and white supremacists. [He] wrote in his preface to the Racial Integrity Act that the state must use 'radical measures' to prevent the 'intermarriage of the white race with mixed stock.' He was especially worried that growing numbers of 'near white people' were surreptitiously gaining white privileges despite their 'intermixture of colored blood.' Plecker's administrative apparatus, composed of midwives and doctors who reported births, undertakers who reported deaths, and marriage license clerks, ensured that the racial identities of all Virginians were accurately recorded, and that the prohibition against intermarriage was strictly enforced."

*When the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are about to enter and occupy, and he clears away many nations before you... Do not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, for that would turn away your children from following me, to serve other gods. (Deuteronomy 7:1-4a)*

There is no place in scripture where the color of one's skin is given as an impediment to marriage. Old Testament laws forbidding marriage outside of the tribe of Israel, as well as New Testament warnings about marriage to an unbeliever, are misrepresented when used to justify banning interracial marriage. Scripture's laws and guidance have to do with the question of preserving one's faith and ensuring your faith in God is handed down to your children; it is never a question of skin color. Each of us needs to have a conversation with God about our feelings regarding interracial marriage.

### **Prayer**

God of all life and love, you created one human family. Help us to see beyond skin color and ethnicity. Help us to see our unity and uniqueness as your creative gift. Make us champions of justice, respect, peace, and love. Amen.