



IV World Day of the Poor

November 15, 2020

“Stretch forth your hand to the poor” (Sir 7:32)

Pope Francis, at the end of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, established the World Day of the Poor in his Apostolic Letter, **Misericordia et Misera** of 20 November 2016. Since the following year, 2017, the 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time, it has become a strong appeal to our believing conscience, so that we are increasingly convinced that sharing with the poor allows us to understand the Gospel in its deepest truth. *“The poor are not a problem: they are a resource from which to draw as we strive to accept and practice in our lives the essence of the Gospel”¹.*

On this day, November 15, we celebrate the fourth World Day of the Poor, with the theme: **“Stretch forth your hand to the poor”**, inspired by the book of Sirach. From this text, Pope Francis observes that *“its author presents his advice concerning many concrete situations in life, one of which is poverty”*. He insists on the fact that *“even amid hardship we must continue to trust in God. Prayer to God and solidarity with the poor and suffering are inseparable... Time devoted to prayer can never become an alibi for neglecting our neighbour in need. In fact the very opposite is true: the Lord’s blessing descends upon us and prayer attains its goal when accompanied by service to the poor”².*

SETTING A PLACE

Decorate the Chapel or any place you have set for prayer with images/symbols of realities of poverty, put the cross/image of Jesus at the centre of the images and symbols.

With the Christian community around the world, let us make this day a day of prayer, reflection and commitment in response to the situation we are experiencing at this time. This is a favourable time to feel again that we need each other; we have a responsibility for each other and for the world and call to carry the burdens of the weakest and most needy.

OPENING SONG: Heal the world (5:mts)

<https://youtu.be/JfsG-i587IU>

¹ Cf. Message of pope Francis about the First World Day of the Poor. 13th June 2017

² Cf. Message of pope Francis about the Fourth World Day of the Poor. 13th June 2020

LISTENING TO THE WORD

Like the sage we find in the Sirach, let us seek the wisdom that makes people better and capable of scrutinizing the vicissitudes of life in depth. In a time of hard trial, of pain and misery caused by moral degradation, of the surrender of ethics, of goodness, of faith and of honesty, let us renew our faith and turn our first thought to God, to ask Him for the gift of wisdom, sure that He will grant it to us³.

Psalms and Proverbs showing God's love

The books of Psalms and Proverbs contains wise ideas about God's desire to rescue the poor and to grant them justice. The invitation is to pray with some of them. We can read them spontaneously with a musical background.

- **"Blessed** is the one who considers the poor! The Lord protects him and keeps him alive"; [Psalm 41:1-2](#)
- **"Whoever** is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed"; [Prov 19:17](#)
- **"Those** who give to the poor will lack nothing" [Prov 28:27](#)
- **"The hope** of the poor shall not perish forever". [Psalm 9:18](#)
- **"Open** your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy." [Prov 31:19](#)
- **"All** my bones shall say, 'O Lord, who is like you, delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him, the poor and needy from him who robs him?'" [Psalm 35:10](#)
- **"Because** the poor are plundered, because the needy groan, I will now arise,' says the Lord; 'I will place him in the safety for which he longs'". [Psalm 12:5](#)
- **"Who** is like the Lord our God, who is seated on high, who looks far down on the heavens and the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes, with the princes of his people". [Psalm 113:5-8](#)
- **"A righteous** man knows the rights of the poor..." [Prov 29:7](#)
- **"Do not rob** the poor, because he is poor, or crush the afflicted at the gate, for the LORD will plead their cause and rob of life those who rob them". [Prov 22:22-23](#)
- **"Blessed** is he who is generous to the poor". [Prov 14:21](#)
- **"Whoever** has a bountiful eye will be blessed, for he shares his bread with the poor". [Prov 22:9](#)

Reading from the Gospel Mt 25: 31-46 (can be read in dialogue)

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

³ Cf. IDEM

SPACE OF SILENCE with musical background

DEEPENING with the message of Pope Francis

Keeping our gaze fixed on the poor is difficult, but more necessary than ever if we are to give proper direction to our personal life and the life of society... It is a concrete commitment inspired by divine charity....

We cannot feel "alright" when any member of the human family is left behind and in the shadows. The silent cry of so many poor men, women and children should find the people of God at the forefront, always and everywhere, in efforts to give them a voice, to protect and support them in the face of hypocrisy and so many unfulfilled promises, and to invite them to share in the life of the community.

For the Christian people, to remind everyone of the great value of the common good is a vital commitment, expressed in the effort to ensure that no one whose human dignity is violated in its basic needs will be forgotten.

The ability to stretch forth our hand shows that we possess an innate capacity to act in ways that give meaning to life. A hand held out is a sign; a sign that immediately speaks of closeness, solidarity and love. In these months, when the whole world was prey to a virus that brought pain and death, despair and bewilderment, how many outstretched hands have we seen! The outstretched hands of physicians who cared about each patient and tried to find the right cure. The outstretched hands of nurses who worked overtime, for hours on end, to look after the sick. The outstretched hands of administrators who procured the means to save as many lives as possible. The outstretched hands of pharmacists who at personal risk responded to people's pressing needs. The outstretched hands of priests whose hearts broke as they offered a blessing. The outstretched hands of volunteers who helped people living on the streets and those with a home yet nothing to eat. The outstretched hands of men and women who worked to provide essential services and security. We could continue to speak of so many other outstretched hands, all of which make up a great litany of good works. Those hands defied contagion and fear in order to offer support and consolation" ⁴.

SILENT SPACE with musical background

DEEPENING with the experience of Claret

I have observed one thing, and the least I can do is set it down here: when one is poor and really wants to be poor freely and not by force, then He enjoys the sweetness of Poverty. Moreover, God will take care of Him in one or two ways – either by moving the hearts of those who have something to give so that they will it to Him, or else by helping him live without eating. I have experienced both. I believe that this dreadful giant, which worldlings call all - powerful, had to be confronted with the holy virtue of poverty. So whenever I encountered greed, I encountered it with poverty. I had nothing, wanted nothing, and refused everything. I was content with the clothes I had on and the food that was set before me. I carried all in a bandanna. The contents of my luggage were a full year breviary, a sheaf of sermon, a pair of socks, and an extra shirt – nothing more⁵.

SONG : Available (9 :39mts) <https://youtu.be/tjIY4UKGI-Y>

⁴ Message of pope Francis about the Fourth World Day of the Poor. 13th June 2020

⁵ Antonio María Claret, Autobiography 364, 359

COMMUNITY SHARING based on the word heard, deepened, and prayed, in a litany alike we ask forgiveness repeating

ANT: forgive us, Lord, for all the times we do not do what you would have done:

- ❖ When we do not recognize our responsibility to be stewards of the creation...
- ❖ When we do not follow the mandate to be your hands and feet in this world...
- ❖ When we are not generous and do not work enough to better the life a human...
- ❖ When we live indifferent to the sufferings of those who are next to us....
- ❖ When we keep our hands in our pockets and do not make a first step to others in need...
- ❖ When we are distracted from the goal of love...
- ❖ When we do not have a compassionate sight...

You can add other invocations

COMMITMENT: we are invited to be aware of and reach out, those who are living in poverty, talk to them, ask about their needs and help them. How can we do these?

OUR FATHER - Recited OR Sang

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord, Friend of the poor and the least. Those who the world despise are your favourites. Give us new eyes to see you in the sick, the elderly, those who suffer of loneliness, and those who are wounded. Give us your grace so that we may discover your living presence in all of them, welcoming g and stretching forth our hand. Amen.

CLOSING SONG: The Love of God (3:38 mts)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWnvmKoLWUU>