



This poor man cried,
and the Lord heard him

2018

Presentation

This poor cries and the Lord listens to him

«This poor cries and the Lord hears him», these are the words of Psalm 34 that frame the Second World Day of the Poor and around which the Message that Pope Francis wanted to offer to the Church can be summarized in three words: shout, respond and free.

These are three verbs that identify God's action and reveal his merciful love for man. Poverty does not remain a word, but "it becomes a cry that crosses the heavens and reaches God" (n.2). The Lord, in turn, not only listens to this desperate request for help, but responds by participating in the condition of the poor to "restore justice and to help resume life with dignity" (No. 3). The hope of the poor does not remain disappointed and God intervenes in his favor to give him back the lost dignity and to make him feel free from the "imprisonment of poverty" (No. 4).

These verbs also concern us and should make us ready to understand that poors, even in our time, cry every day. Considering the blind Bartimaeus as his icon (see Mark 10.46-52), Pope Francis emphasizes how many poor people can be identified in this poor man on the edge of the road, which many wanted to silence. Even today, in fact, "the voices that are heard are those of the reproach and of the invitation to be silent and to suffer" (n.5). This cry, however, often fails to reach our ears and touch our hearts, leaving us indifferent and unable to respond. In fact, poors, too many times are considered "not only as indigent people, but also as bearers of insecurity, instability, disorientation from daily habits and, therefore, they are rejected and kept away" (n.5). Yet the salvation of God should take form of our helping hand towards the poor, making him feel the friendship he needs and making him experience the closeness that makes him feel free: "Every Christian and every community are called to be God's instruments for the liberation and promotion of the poor" (*Evangelii gaudium*, 187).

This instrument intends to be a simple help offered to dioceses, parishes and to all the various ecclesial realities, to prepare to live the Second World Day of the Poor, because once again this moment can be a stronger one to look more towards poors, listen to their cry and do not let them miss our help and our closeness.

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MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
SECOND WORLD DAY OF THE POOR
33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
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This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him

1. “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him” (*Ps* 34:6). The words of the Psalmist become our own whenever we are called to encounter the different conditions of suffering and marginalization experienced by so many of our brothers and sisters whom we are accustomed to label generically as “the poor”. The Psalmist is not alien to suffering; quite the contrary. He has a direct experience of poverty and yet transforms it into a song of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. Psalm 34 allows us today, surrounded as we are by many different forms of poverty, to know those who are truly poor. It enables us to open our eyes to them, to hear their cry and to recognize their needs.

We are told, in the first place, that the Lord listens to the poor who cry out to him; he is good to those who seek refuge in him, whose hearts are broken by sadness, loneliness and exclusion. The Lord listens to those who, trampled in their dignity, still find the strength to look up to him for light and comfort. He listens to those persecuted in the name of a false justice, oppressed by policies unworthy of the name, and terrified by violence, yet know that God is their Saviour. What emerges from this prayer is above all the sense of abandonment and trust in a Father who can hear and understand. Along these same lines, we can better appreciate the meaning of Jesus’ words, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (*Mt* 5:3).

This experience, unique and in many ways undeserved and inexpressible, makes us want to share it with others, especially those who, like the Psalmist, are poor, rejected and marginalized. No one should feel excluded from the Father’s love, especially in a world that often presents wealth as the highest goal and encourages self-centredness.

2. Psalm uses three verbs to describe the poor man in his relationship with God. First of all, “**to cry**”. Poverty cannot be summed up in a word; it becomes a cry that rises to heaven and reaches God. What does the cry of the poor express, if not their suffering and their solitude, their disappointment and their hope? We can ask ourselves how their plea, which rises to the presence of God, can fail to reach our own ears, or leave us cold and indifferent. On this *World Day of the Poor*, we are called to make a serious examination of conscience, to see if we are truly capable of hearing the cry of the poor.

To hear their voice, what we need is the silence of people who are prepared to listen. If we speak too much ourselves, we will be unable to hear them. At times I fear that many initiatives, meritorious and necessary in themselves, are meant more to satisfy those who undertake them than to respond to the real cry of the poor. When this is the case, the cry of the poor resounds, but our reaction is inconsistent and we become unable to empathize with their condition. We are so trapped in a culture that induces us to look in the mirror and pamper ourselves, that we think that an altruistic gesture is enough, without the need to get directly involved.

3. The second verb is “**to answer**”. The Psalmist tells us that the Lord does not only listen to the cry of the poor, but responds. His answer, as seen in the entire history of salvation, is to share lovingly in the lot of the poor. So it was when Abram spoke to God of his desire for offspring, despite the fact that he and his wife Sarah were old in years and had no children (cf. *Gen* 15:1-6). So too when Moses, in front of a bush that burned without being consumed, received the revelation of God’s name and the mission to free his people from Egypt (*Ex* 3:1-15). This was also the case during Israel’s wandering in the desert, in the grip of hunger and thirst (cf. *Ex* 16:1-6; 17:1-7), and its falling into the worst kind of poverty, namely, infidelity to the covenant and idolatry (cf. *Ex* 32:1-14).

God's answer to the poor is always a saving act that heals wounds of body and soul, restores justice and helps to live life anew in dignity. God's answer is also a summons to those who believe in him to do likewise, within the limits of what is humanly possible. The World Day of the Poor wishes to be a small answer that the Church throughout the world gives to the poor of every kind and in every land, lest they think that their cry has gone unheard. It may well be like a drop of water in the desert of poverty, yet it can serve as a sign of sharing with those in need, and enable them to sense the active presence of a brother or a sister. The poor do not need intermediaries, but the personal involvement of all those who hear their cry. The concern of believers in their regard cannot be limited to a kind of assistance – as useful and as providential as this may be in the beginning – but requires a “loving attentiveness” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 199) that honours the person as such and seeks out his or her best interests.

4. The third verb is “to free”. In the Bible, the poor live in the certainty that God intervenes on their behalf to restore their dignity. Poverty is not something that anyone desires, but is caused by selfishness, pride, greed and injustice. These are evils as old as the human race itself, but also sins in which the innocent are caught up, with tragic effects at the level of social life. God's act of liberation is a saving act for those who lift up to him their sorrow and distress. The bondage of poverty is shattered by the power of God's intervention. Many of the Psalms recount and celebrate this history of salvation mirrored in the personal life of the poor: “For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; and he has not hid his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him” (*Ps* 22:24). The ability to see God's face is a sign of his friendship, his closeness and his salvation. “You have seen my affliction, you have taken heed of my adversities... you have set my feet in a broad place” (*Ps* 31:7-8). To offer the poor a “broad space” is to set them free from the “snare of the fowler” (*Ps* 91:3); it is to free them from the trap hidden on their path, so that they can move forward with serenity on the path of life. God's salvation is a hand held out to the poor, a hand that welcomes, protects and enables them to experience the friendship they need. From this concrete and tangible proximity, a genuine path of liberation emerges. “Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. This demands that we be docile and attentive to the cry of the poor and to come to their aid” (*Evangelii gaudium*, 187).

5. I find it moving to know that many poor people identify with the blind beggar Bartimaeus mentioned by the evangelist Mark (cf. 10:46-52). Bartimaeus “was sitting by the roadside to beg” (v. 46); having heard that Jesus was passing by, “he began to cry out and say, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me’” (v. 47). “Many rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more” (v. 48). The Son of God heard his plea and said: “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to him, “Master, let me receive my sight” (v. 51). This Gospel story makes visible what the Psalm proclaims as a promise. Bartimaeus is a poor person who finds himself lacking things as essential as sight and the ability to work for a living. How many people today feel in the same situation! Lack of basic means of subsistence, marginalization due to a reduced capacity for work, various forms of social enslavement, despite all our human progress... How many poor people today are like Bartimaeus, sitting on the roadside and looking for meaning in their lives! How many of them wonder why they have fallen so far and how they can escape! They are waiting for someone to come up to them and say: “Take heart; rise, he is calling you” (v. 49). Sadly, the exact opposite often happens, and the poor hear voices scolding them, telling them to be quiet and to put up with their lot. These voices are harsh, often due to fear of the poor, who are considered not only destitute but also a source of insecurity and unrest, an unwelcome distraction from life as usual and needing to be rejected and kept afar. We tend to create a distance between them and us, without realizing that in this way we are distancing ourselves from the Lord Jesus, who does not reject the poor, but calls them to himself and comforts them. The words of the Prophet Isaiah telling believers how to conduct themselves are most apt in this case. They are “to loose the

bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free and to break every yoke... to share bread with the hungry and bring the homeless and poor into the house... to cover the naked” (58:6-7). Such deeds allow sin to be forgiven (cf. *1 Pet* 4:8) and justice to take its course. They ensure that when we cry to the Lord, he will answer and say: “Here I am!” (cf. *Is* 58:9).

6. The poor are the first to recognize God’s presence and to testify to his closeness in their lives. God remains faithful to his promise; and even in the darkness of the night, he does not withhold the warmth of his love and consolation. However, for the poor to overcome their oppressive situation, they need to sense the presence of brothers and sisters who are concerned for them and, by opening the doors of their hearts and lives, make them feel like friends and family. Only in this way can the poor discover “the saving power at work in their lives” and “put them at the centre of the Church’s pilgrim way” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 198).

On this *World Day*, we are asked to fulfil the words of the Psalm: “The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied” (*Ps* 22:26). We know that in the Temple of Jerusalem, after the rites of sacrifice, a banquet was held. It was this experience that, in many dioceses last year, enriched the celebration of the first *World Day of the Poor*. Many people encountered the warmth of a home, the joy of a festive meal and the solidarity of those who wished to sit together at table in simplicity and fraternity. I would like this year’s, and all future *World Days*, to be celebrated in a spirit of joy at the rediscovery of our capacity for togetherness. Praying together as a community and sharing a meal on Sunday is an experience that brings us back to the earliest Christian community, described by the evangelist Luke in all its primitive simplicity: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers... And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need” (*Acts* 2:42.44-45).

7. Countless initiatives are undertaken every day by the Christian community in order to offer closeness and a helping hand in the face of the many forms of poverty all around us. Often too, our cooperation with other initiatives inspired not by faith but by human solidarity, make it possible for us to provide help that otherwise we would have been unable to offer. The realization that in the face of so much poverty our capacity for action is limited, weak and insufficient, leads us to reach out to others so that, through mutual cooperation, we can attain our goals all the more effectively. We Christians are inspired by faith and by the imperative of charity, but we can also acknowledge other forms of assistance and solidarity that aim in part for the same goals, provided that we do not downplay our specific role, which is to lead everyone to God and to holiness. Dialogue between different experiences, and humility in offering our cooperation without seeking the limelight, is a fitting and completely evangelical response that we can give.

In the service of the poor, there is no room for competition. Rather, we should humbly recognize that the Spirit is the source of our actions that reveal God’s closeness and his answer to our prayers. When we find ways of drawing near to the poor, we know that the primacy belongs to God, who opens our eyes and hearts to conversion. The poor do not need self-promoters, but a love that knows how to remain hidden and not think about all the good it has been able to do. At the centre must always be the Lord and the poor. Anyone desirous of serving is an instrument in God’s hands, a means of manifesting his saving presence. Saint Paul recalled this when he wrote to the Christians in Corinth who competed for the more prestigious charisms: “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you,’ nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you’” (*1 Cor* 12:21). Paul makes an important point when he notes that the apparently weaker parts of the body are in fact the most necessary (cf. v. 22), and that those “we think less honourable we invest with the greater honour, and our unrepresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require” (vv. 23-24). Paul offers the community a basic teaching about charisms, but also about the attitude it should have, in the light of the Gospel, towards its weaker and needier

members. Far be it from Christ's disciples to nurture feelings of disdain or pity towards the poor. Instead, we are called to honour the poor and to give them precedence, out of the conviction that they are a true presence of Jesus in our midst. "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (*Mt 25:40*).

8. Here we can see how far our way of life must be from that of the world, which praises, pursues and imitates the rich and powerful, while neglecting the poor and deeming them useless and shameful. The words of the Apostle Paul invite us to a fully evangelical solidarity with the weaker and less gifted members of the body of Christ: "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together" (*1 Cor 12:26*). In his Letter to the Romans, Paul also tells us: "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly" (12:15-16). This is the vocation of each of Christ's followers; the ideal for which we must constantly strive is ever greater conformity to the "mind of Jesus Christ" (*Phil 2:5*).

9. Faith naturally inspires a message of hope. Often it is precisely the poor who can break through our indifference, born of a worldly and narrow view of life. The cry of the poor is also a cry of hope that reveals the certainty of future liberation. This hope is grounded in the love of God, who does not abandon those who put their trust in him (cf. *Rom 8:31-39*). As Saint Teresa of Avila writes in *The Way of Perfection*: "Poverty comprises many virtues. It is a vast domain. I tell you, whoever despises all earthly goods is master of them all" (2:5). It is in the measure in which we are able to discern authentic good that we become rich before God and wise in our own eyes and in those of others. It is truly so. To the extent that we come to understand the true meaning of riches, we grow in humanity and become capable of sharing.

10. I invite my brother bishops, priests, and especially deacons, who have received the laying on of hands for the service of the poor (cf. *Acts 6:1-7*), as well as religious and all those lay faithful – men and women – who in parishes, associations and ecclesial movements make tangible the Church's response to the cry of the poor, to experience this *World Day* as a privileged moment of new evangelization. The poor evangelize us and help us each day to discover the beauty of the Gospel. Let us not squander this grace-filled opportunity. On this day, may all of us feel that we are in debt to the poor, because, in hands outstretched to one another, a salvific encounter can take place to strengthen our faith, inspire our charity and enable our hope to advance securely on our path towards the Lord who is to come.

From the Vatican, 13 June 2018
Memorial of Saint Anthony of Padua

Francis

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
FIRST WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

Vatican Basilica
XXXIII Sunday of Ordinary Time, 19 November 2017

We have the joy of breaking the bread of God's word, and shortly, we will have the joy of breaking and receiving the Bread of the Eucharist, food for life's journey. All of us, none excluded, need this, for all of us are *beggars* when it comes to what is *essential*: God's love, which gives meaning to our lives and a life without end. So today too, we lift up our hands to him, asking to receive his gifts.

The Gospel parable speaks of gifts. It tells us that we have received talents from God, "according to ability of each" (*Mt 25:15*). Before all else, let us realize this: we do have talents; in God's eyes, we are "talented". Consequently, no one can think that he or she is useless, so poor as to be incapable of giving something to others. We are chosen and blessed by God, who wants to fill us with his gifts, more than any father or mother does with their own children. And God, in whose eyes no child can be neglected, entrusts to each of us a mission.

Indeed, as the loving and demanding Father that he is, he gives us responsibility. In the parable, we see that each servant is given talents to use wisely. But whereas the first two servants do what they are charged, the third does not make his talents bear fruit; he gives back only what he had received. "I was afraid – he says – and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours" (v. 25). As a result, he is harshly rebuked as "wicked and lazy" (v. 26). What made the Master displeased with him? To use a word that may sound a little old-fashioned but is still timely, I would say it was his *omission*. His evil was that of *failing to do* good. All too often, we have the idea that we haven't done anything wrong, and so we rest content, presuming that we are good and just. But in this way we risk acting like the unworthy servant: he did no wrong, he didn't waste the talent, in fact he kept it carefully hidden in the ground. But to do no wrong is not enough. God is not an inspector looking for unstamped tickets; he is a Father looking for children to whom he can entrust his property and his plans (cf. v. 14). It is sad when the Father of love does not receive a generous response of love from his children, who do no more than keep the rules and follow the commandments, like hired hands in the house of the Father (cf. *Lk 15:17*).

The unworthy servant, despite receiving a talent from the Master who loves to share and multiply his gifts, guarded it jealously; he was content to keep it safe. But someone concerned only to preserve and maintain the treasures of the past is not being faithful to God. Instead, the parable tells us, the one who adds new talents is truly "faithful" (vv. 21 and 23), because he sees things as God does; he does not stand still, but instead, out of love, takes risks. He puts his life on the line for others; he is not content to keep things as they are. One thing alone does he overlook: his own interest. That is the only right "omission".

Omission is also the great sin where the poor are concerned. Here it has a specific name: *indifference*. It is when we say, "That doesn't regard me; it's not my business; it's society's problem". It is when we turn away from a brother or sister in need, when we change channels as soon as a disturbing question comes up, when we grow indignant at evil but do nothing about it. God will not ask us if we felt righteous indignation, but whether we did some good.

How, in practice can we please God? When we want to please someone dear to us, for example by giving a gift, we need first to know that person's tastes, lest the gift prove more pleasing to the giver than to the recipient. When we want to offer something to the Lord, we can find his tastes in the

Gospel. Immediately following the passage that we heard today, Jesus says, “Truly I tell you that, just as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me” (*Mt 25:40*). These least of our brethren, whom he loves dearly, are the hungry and the sick, the stranger and the prisoner, the poor and the abandoned, the suffering who receive no help, the needy who are cast aside. On their faces we can imagine seeing Jesus’ own face; on their lips, even if pursed in pain, we can hear his words: “This is my body” (*Mt 26:26*).

In the poor, Jesus knocks on the doors of our heart, thirsting for our love. When we overcome our indifference and, in the name of Jesus, we give of ourselves for the least of his brethren, we are his good and faithful friends, with whom he loves to dwell. God greatly appreciates the attitude described in today’s first reading that of the “good wife”, who “opens her hand to the poor, and reaches out her hands to the needy” (*Prov 31:10.20*). Here we see true goodness and strength: not in closed fists and crossed arms, but in ready hands outstretched to the poor, to the wounded flesh of the Lord.

There, in the poor, we find the presence of Jesus, who, though rich, became poor (cf. *2 Cor 8:9*). For this reason, in them, in their weakness, a “saving power” is present. And if in the eyes of the world they have little value, they are the ones who open to us the way to heaven; they are our “passport to paradise”. For us it is *an evangelical duty* to care for them, as our real riches, and to do so not only by giving them bread, but also by breaking with them the bread of God’s word, which is addressed first to them. To love the poor means to combat all forms of poverty, spiritual and material.

And it will also do us good. Drawing near to the poor in our midst will touch our lives. It will remind us of what really counts: to love God and our neighbour. Only this lasts forever, everything else passes away. What we invest in love remains, the rest vanishes. Today we might ask ourselves: “What counts for me in life? Where am I making my investments?” In fleeting riches, with which the world is never satisfied, or in the wealth bestowed by God, who gives eternal life? This is the choice before us: to live in order to gain things on earth, or to give things away in order to gain heaven. Where heaven is concerned, what matters is not what we *have*, but what we *give*, for “those who store up treasures for themselves, do not grow rich in the sight of God” (*Lk 12:21*).

So let us not seek for ourselves more than we need, but rather what is good for others, and nothing of value will be lacking to us. May the Lord, who has compassion for our poverty and needs, and bestows his talents upon us, grant us the wisdom to seek what really matters, and the courage to love, not in words but in deeds.

I Proposal for Lectio
They divided substances among themselves and no one was in need
(Acts 2.45)

The poor are not blessed because they are poor, but they become such when they do not fail in trusting the Lord. There is no passage from the Old and New Testament that exalts poverty as a virtue. In itself it is an expression of poverty and marginalization, but it is transformed into value, when poverty is motivated by trust, discipleship and sharing. First of all, the poor is happy when he is convinced that the Lord hears his cry for help (Ps 33: 7). Then the Lord makes himself close to those who have broken hearts, make the poor feel free from his anguish and nothing is missing from those who fear him, as the Psalm just quoted continues. Only when it is pervaded by trust in the Lord poverty become a challenge for those who rely on wealth, as if God did not exist. Then the impact of the Psalm reverberates to the Magnificat of Mary because God is able to fill the hungry with goods and send the rich empty-handed (Lk 1:53).

To the Lord's poor's trust, Jesus of Nazareth adds poverty as a discipleship. Since the beginning of his public life, he has not made a simple "preferential" choice for the poor, but has evangelized the poor (see Lk 4:18) and has proposed poverty as a condition for discipleship. Eloquent is the dialogue with the rich young man (see Mt 19: 16-22): Jesus puts him in front of an important choice, between his goods and discipleship. Not that the kingdom's Gospel was addressed only to the poor, but Jesus knew very well that by choosing the last, discipleship becomes possible even for the rich, while the opposite is almost never possible. Motivated by discipleship, pors are not only recipients of the gospel, but become themselves Gospel's witnesses. From being evangelized they became evangelisers pors choose the narrow door of discipleship and not the wide one of wealth. And it is in this relationship between discipleship and poverty that the poor are blessed: of them is the kingdom of heaven (see Lk 5,20). The beatitude of the poor is not intended for the future, but it will be realized in the present of those who choose the path of discipleship.

On this path the first Christian communities divided the substances between themselves and no one was in need, as one of the summaries recalls, reported by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles. Sharing of goods as a condition of poverty assumes the demands of the poor who trusts the Lord and he is willing to follow Jesus to characterize the ecclesial life. Twice the author of the Acts mentions the sharing of goods in the so-called "summaries", dedicated to the life of the first Christian communities. In the first summary the focus is on common life (Acts 2: 42-47); in the second he adds the unity of one who has only one heart and one soul (Acts 4: 32-35). At a first reading the two frameworks that we are recalling create a sort of nostalgia for the golden age of the early church, to the detriment of the contemporary one. In fact, the same summaries are immediately denied by the situation for which not everyone shared their assets, as evidenced by the choices of Ananias and Sapphres who kept part of their assets for themselves (Acts 5: 1-11). Thus the author of the Acts presents two frameworks that, at the same time, reflect the present reality and focus on the ideal life of the Church. Meaning that the sharing of goods and overcoming of poverty (and of any poverty) are inalienable and permanent values for the Church of every time. Thus Luke also gives our communities some instances of perennial relevance, including the fraction of bread, freedom and growth.

It is not by chance that the first summary begins with perseverance in the teaching of the apostles, communion, the breaking of bread and prayer (Acts 2:42). Only the second measure talks about sharing of good and the overcoming of the need among believers. The first sharing is prayer and Eucharist which create a natural impulse towards the donation of one's own goods. Without prayer and the Eucharist, any form of sharing of goods is not able to last long. On the other side, when it is sustained by prayer and Eucharist, the sharing of goods is transformed into a worship pleasing to the Lord. Expressive is the term that unites Eucharist and sharing of goods: *koinonia* (communion)

is an expression of what is *koinos* or in common; and *koinos* is the impure. On closer inspection, every true communion is contamination, in the highest sense of the term. We are contaminated by wounds and poverties of others when Eucharistic communion becomes the sharing of goods. This is why the more we persevere in prayer, the more constant we are in charity; it is one of the principal vectors through the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles.

The two general views on Church's life have often been misunderstood, especially on the topic of sharing the goods, the path of obligation and equality has been undertaken. In reality none of those who shared their goods was forced to do so, nor was it illusions that, in this way, all believers would reach the same economic and social level. The case of Ananias and Saffira mentioned above demonstrates that freedom is the necessary condition for the communion of goods and not compulsion. Where freedom of the other is suppressed because of economic sharing, maximum injustice is reached, while it is freedom as service that guarantees the most sincere sharing. The expression of freedom in sharing for poors is the joy or delight of those who, supported by the fraction of bread, recognizing the Eucharistic body in the body of Christ who creates believers. In his diptych of the third gospel and the Acts, Luke often repeats the binomial of sharing and joy because it is from the latter that we can measure sincerity of the first and not the other way round. Only when Zacchaeus full of joy, welcomes Jesus into his own home, he becomes capable of giving half of his belongings to poors (see Lk 19: 6-8).

The third instance on the life of the first communities is its growth: Luke points out that every day the Lord added to the community those who were saved (Acts 2:47). The church that shares goods and takes care of the poor's urgencies is not located outside town, nor it is a sect relegated to the margins of society, but lives and grows in the city. It is not difficult to find expressions of communion of goods between movements and sects separated from their social contexts. Instead it is a constant challenge that the sharing of goods is realized in the city and in its social fabric; it is the message that Luke spreads for the Church of all time. Thus the well-known proverbial saying that "all things are in common among friends" is realized when everything is in common among believers. The favor of the people towards the first communities is an expression of a credibility gained in the field: of a Church that shares goods and takes care of poor's needs and not of a recumbent on itself that imploding, impoverishes instead of growing .

The double implications of the summaries we have mentioned - real situation and ideal instance on the Church - finds its most concrete expression in the collection for poors of the Church of Jerusalem and among the individual churches: an initiative that accompanies Church's life from its origins and caused by the emergency for a great famine that had struck the empire. Thus the collection in money between Churches is born in a spontaneous way, and it presents the features of the summaries we have already commented. This collection is an expression of communion between Churches, where the generosity of the poorer Churches stands out compared to the more affluent ones. Even collection is not dictated by any obligation and it is not marked by a fixed quota, but is an expression of everyone's freedom. And it attests the growth of the Church in the city, where the first Christian communities develop like wildfire.

The unreachable model of the collection for poors is our Lord Jesus Christ with his grace: from a rich man he became poor to make us rich oh his poverty (see 2Cor 8,9). Christ's model remains an unreachable one because we have never seen somebody who deprives himself of his wealth to enrich others. In general, those who dilapidate their property do not enrich anyone with their poverty. However just because it is inimitable, the rich poverty of Christ engenders an exemplarity in continuous realization that has never been acquired by anyone. If during his public life Jesus evangelized poors and poverty is a condition for discipleship, at the time where the Church sharing of goods is necessary so that all forms of poverty may be filled.

II Proposal for Lectio
The Lord hears the cry of the poor
How the generosity of God can inspire us

In the suburbs of Manila, Nairobi and Lima (as well as many megalopolis of developed countries) we encounter poverty in its extreme form. This poverty threatens health and life, endangering the dignity of humanity. We can meet extreme poverty among those who escape from violent conflicts and those who suffer the consequences of climate change. Millions of our brothers and sisters live in hardly sustainable conditions. Children die without even having the opportunity to face the challenges of life and to commit themselves to a better future. Most of these sufferings are not due to the lack of resources, but from the violence of conflicts and the absence of political goodwill to grant everyone the least access to the treasures of the earth. Those of us who live a better life tend to avoid, or even repress, this reality.

The sensitivity of God, however, is above all and directed towards those who suffer. «This poor cries and the Lord hears him» (Ps 34, 7). Consolatory words like these can be misunderstood as a sort of "opium of the people", confining the theme of poverty in the sphere of spirituality and minimizing our sense of social responsibility. However, the sensitivity of God towards the cry of the poor aims the opposite: it encourages us to imitate God in being sensitive to the question of poverty. The idea of "imitation of God" is concretely expressed in the teaching of Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy. God "gives justice to the orphan and the widow, loves the stranger and gives him bread and clothes. Therefore love the stranger, so that you too may be strangers in the land of Egypt "(Deut. 10, 18-19). In fact, God takes care of needy people and his faithful are called to collaborate with him. Foreigners, that is refugees and victims of forced migration, have been subject to human harshness, as well as to economic hardships up to the present day. This is why they enjoy special attention in the divine ethics of Sinai: "You shall love him as you love yourself because you also were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Lv 19, 34).

Attention to the poverty of mankind begins with concrete personal experience. The abyss of suffering caused by poverty can be experienced when we visit the suburbs, where people live among piles of waste produced by others. God's perception of suffering, emphasized in the book of Exodus, is the reason for his redemption plan: "I have observed the misery of my people in Egypt and I have heard its cry because of its superintendents: I know its sufferings. I descended to make him feel free from the power of Egypt and to make him rise from this land to a beautiful and spacious land, to a land where milk and honey flow "(Ex 3: 7-8). Although the road to a better life may be long - God's people have walked the desert for forty years! -, this begins with the vision and the hope of liberation.

The question of poverty requires more than ever attention and reflection on a global level. The universal generosity of God is seen in the biblical stories of creation. The world with all its riches is "very good" in the eyes of God (Gen. 1: 31). The Lord entrusts the world to humanity: "You have given him power over the works of your hands, everything you have placed under your feet: all the flocks and herds and even the beasts of the countryside, the birds of the sky and the fish of the sea, every being who goes along the ways of the seas "(Ps 8, 7-9). While these words must have sounded utopian in ancient times, when humankind usually feared wild animals and sea monsters, they may sound like a concrete and shocking prophecy to our modern ears. Humanity has developed terrifying methods of domination of nature. However, instead of subjugating it, we are called to take care of it. God created Adam and placed him in the beautiful garden of Eden "to cultivate and guard him" (Gen 2, 15). We are called to support current initiatives that promote responsible use of natural resources, sustainability and global cooperation. By guarding our planet, we imitate God himself, who planted the cedars of Lebanon (Ps 104: 16) and feeds the young lions who "roar in search of prey and ask God for their food" (Ps 104, 21)).

God's generosity in the creation gives resources to eliminate dehumanizing poverty. The Lord calls the humanity to learn from the beauty of his creation and to imitate the abundant generosity we see in it. "Everyone's eyes are turned to you and you give them food at the right time. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living man "(Ps 145: 15-16). Just as the hands of God are continually open, we too are encouraged: "Open your hand generously to your poor and needy brother in your land" (Deut. 15, 11).

God's generosity goes to extremes when he descends to human poverty in the manger of Bethlehem (Lk 2). In his life and mission Jesus includes the healing of the sick and the integration of the excluded of society. Doctors and social workers have the honor of following Jesus in this mission. Not wealth, but generosity is what Jesus appreciates when he praises the offering of the poor widow (Mk 12: 41-44). Jesus also identifies himself with those who are the most needy. The ultimate criterion of our relationship with Jesus is: "All you have done to one of these my little brothers, you have done it to me" (Mt 25:40).

Paul accuses the Corinthians of lack of sensitivity towards those who are economically disadvantaged within the community (1 Corinthians 11: 21ff). Luke, on the other hand, tells us about the radical attitude of generosity and sharing that already existed among the first Christians inspired by the Holy Spirit: "They sold their properties and substances and shared them with everyone, according to the need of each" (Acts 2:45). This generosity is not an external act, but an expression of faith itself. It arises from the awareness that life finds fulfillment in collaboration to build together the Kingdom of God. "Has not God chosen the poor in the eyes of the world, who are rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom, promised to those who love him?" (Jas 2, 5). John encourages us to love "with deeds and in truth" (1 Jn 3:18). The "facts" presuppose ears open to the cry of the suffering and to the divine call to collaborate with the divine project of liberation. To love in "truth" can be realized today by looking in what way we can contribute to the common good of humanity.

The word of God instills a spirit of courageous optimism, of active commitment and cooperation. All believers in God the Creator are called to consider humanity as one community. All human gifts - intellectual, social and spiritual - are necessary in collaboration for a world that is "very good" in the eyes of God.

Suggestions for spiritual reading and meditation: Dt 10, 16-19; Sal 104; Acts 2, 41-47.

III Proposal for Lectio
This poor cries and the Lord hears him (Ps 33,7a)
The cry of the poor as an appeal from God

The psalm talks about of "this poor man", not of poors in general but of a well-determined poor. This is reminiscent of a passage from Deuteronomy which says: "You will take care of your poor" (Dt 15,11). The poor person in the Bible is always a specific person or an individual, its never a category left in the background. Because the needy will never be lacking in the country; therefore I give you this command and I say to you: Gently open your hand to your poor and needy brother in your land (Dt 15,11).

But the original text says: "Open your hand to your brother, to your poor, to your humble." What we must pay attention to is that particle, that possessive adjective "yours": your hand, your brother, but above all your poor and your humiliated. God does not speak in plural, he does not say "our or your brothers, our or your poor", but he seems to want everyone to take care of every single poor person, of a needy individual, who establishes a personal relationship with him. Even more, he wants us to discover in ourself the others who need help.

The other concerns us because it is in us. Each person is not an isolated entity: his story takes part in other stories, intertwines with other lives, forming an inextricable plot. And this is the ethical foundation of our caring for one another. The same principle reaches its climax in the Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 25: "Whatever you did to one of these little ones, you did it to me". But who are the little ones? Jesus does not give a definition, also because, if he gave it, we would end up doing good only to that category, neglecting or damaging the others. Everyone has its "little ones" that are the ones that are most unpleasant, those that he helps with greater effort. The man on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho who came across the brigands was a Jew, and the only one who helped him was a Samaritan, who in theory would have been almost an enemy. But the Samaritan had compassion and helped the seriously wounded Jew. Charity, solidarity overcomes the usual barriers between people, such as ethnic or religious affiliation.

It is known that Jesus in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10, 25-37) modifies the discourse. In fact, he is asked: "Who is my neighbor?" In the perspective of who he can help; but Jesus works a reversal of perspective and seems rather to invite the listener to put himself in the victim's shoes. How is it possible to have mercy if one has no empathy towards those who suffer? How is it possible to take care of the other if he is opposed himself to the other? The proximity relationship presupposes one to discover oneself neighbors and brothers, even in the difference.

By proposing such a broad definition of poors and the little ones I do not want to say that poverty in the strict sense, material poverty, is not serious. In reality, the broad definition serves precisely to make us understand how we are one thing with poors materials, from the Gospel point of view. But this is not at all our ordinary point of view. We feel distinct from the majority of poors. Instead, Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God according to our faith, identifies himself totally with the poor and the least, foreigners, prisoners, etc. Because of our difficulty in identifying ourselves with the poor, it is useful to consider poverty in a broader sense, seeing in what ways we ourselves can recognize ourselves as poor. I, for example, am economically rich enough, but because I am disabled I live in a state of physical poverty, because I depend totally on others in all aspects of my life. Whatever I do, I have to do it with the help of someone else, in a kind of communion. There are so many types of poverty. Someone can find himself poor spiritually or emotionally. The important thing is to refuse to stay poor alone. We must always relate to others and to the Other. We must learn to ask - better kindly! - and to receive, as well as to give. We must commune both our own wealth and our own poverty, not keeping them for ourselves. The latter is the most common temptation, but we must win it.

The relationship with the poor should be personal, that is, from person to person, without putting on a pedestal to the other, but not even lower. It is necessary to discover poverty in one's life story in order to feel and understand poverty in the history of the other.

Listening to God is mercy and those who listen to God perform works of mercy

"The poor cries" means that he does not make a structured speech. Our misery is so deep that we can not explain. Jesus, dying on the cross, shouts. And it is not clear what he says. This is what Marco says (15.33-37): *When noon came, darkness fell over the whole earth, until three o'clock in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice: Eloi, Eloi, lemà sabactàni ?, which means: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Some of those present, hearing this, said: "Behold, call Elias!" One ran to soak a sponge of vinegar and, post it on a reed, gave him a drink, saying, "Wait, let's see if Elijah comes to take him off the cross." But Jesus, giving a loud cry, expired.*

Psalm 33 does not say what the poor cries. It could be a cry of pain, of anger, without words. Almost a blasphemy. And this is precisely what God hears. As Job listened. In the ancient sapiential book, Job is almost accused of blasphemy by his friends because he dares to ask God why he lets him suffer, instead of accepting and accepting passively. Psalm 33 says, however: "The Lord listens to him". Listening from the Lord is not a simple hearing. When God listens, "he tends his ear", and after the ear he also extends his hand. This recalls the Book of Exodus (3.7-10): *The Lord said: "I have observed the misery of my people in Egypt. and I heard his cry because of his superintendents: I know his sufferings. I have come down to free him from the power of Egypt and to make it rise from this land to a beautiful and spacious land, to a land where milk and honey flow, towards the place where the Cananeo, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzita, the Eweo, the Gebuseum are located. Behold, the cry of the Israelites has come to me and I myself have seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So go! I send you to the pharaoh. Get my people out of Egypt, the Israelites! "*

However, listening to God immediately becomes his intervention. When God hears, he descends. And he involves the human being: "Go! I send you". This is why the cry of the poor becomes a call from God. For example, in Exodus God calls Moses to collaborate with him on the liberation of the people. Despite all the difficulties that Moses camps, he eventually goes and performs his mission with the help of Aaron who helps him overcome his "mouth and tongue" deficit. Moses had to talk to the pharaoh but he had difficulty speaking. Who would choose a clumsy mouth and tongue spokesperson, if not God? The God who says to Paul: "My grace is enough for you. My power is fully manifested in weakness "(2 Cor 12: 9).

It is therefore not a matter of power or efficiency, as we would expect following our human logic. The descent of God is a lowering, it is the humble service to the poor: "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10.45). And in Jn 13: 11-15, he says: "When he had washed their feet, he took up his garments, sat down again and said to them: "Do you understand what I have done for you? You call me the Master and the Lord, and you say well, because I am. So if I, the Lord and the Master, have washed the feet of you, you must also wash one another's feet. I have given you an example, so that you may do as I have done to you"». «I have given you an example»: in Greek it is ὑπόδειγμα (hypódeigma), which comes from the verb hypodéiknymi whose first meaning is «to show secretly». Although I am not entirely sure of this interpretation, it is suggestive to think that Jesus who makes himself a servant says to his disciples: «I have shown you my secret, I have made you share in my deepest feelings». The most profound feeling of Christ is love. Making himself man, the Son chose, in unanimity with the Father, precisely this way of humility and poverty, precariousness and dependence, and precisely for this reason he proves to be God: precisely because he had the strength to choose weakness until death on the cross. The cry of the poor man is inarticulate, but God listens to him, suffocates him and transforms him into an appeal for the action of his children. Listening to God is mercy, and those who listen to God do works of mercy.

IV Lectio proposal **Bethany, the house of the poor**

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Laz'arus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; Martha served, and Laz'arus was one of those at table with him. Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was to betray him), said, "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not that he cared for the poor but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box he used to take what was put into it. Jesus said, "Let her alone, let her keep it for the day of my burial. The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me." (John 12.1-8)

This story, full of symbolism, is located in a strategic "place" within the Gospel of John. After the resurrection of Lazarus, religious authorities' decisions on killing Jesus became stronger (see Jn 11: 49-53). Here, what is about to happen involves a question of life and death.

The story is settled from a temporal point of view during Jesus' Easter, where the victory of Life on death is recorded and, from the spatial point of view in Bethany, name that probably derives from bêth 'anî, "the house of the poor" . It is also the home of life where death is defeated, an idea suggested by Lazarus as one who had been "raised from the dead". From the same presentation, the reader understands that we will talk about the poor, life and death ...

The dinner that is prepared for Jesus is an advance of one and unique dinner of which the same Gospel of John will talk, the last supper (see Jn 13: 2), and in some way - and with it - it is also advance of the eschatological banquet, at the end of time. Who are those who prepare it? It is not made explicit, perhaps to invite you to recognize any Christian community. The community of Bethany, community of the poor, can serve as a paradigm for our current communities. All, indistinctly, we are represented by the characters in the story.

Like Martha, we want to put ourselves at the service of others (diakonía). All of us, like Lazarus, have been raised up by Jesus, saved from our dead by his resurrection power. There are also, in each of us, selfish and petty attitudes, such as those attributed in the story to Judas.

In the scene, the real action begins when Mary performs the anointing, a gesture that becomes a model for living our bonds within the community. The pure and precious nard evokes in the reader the beloved of the Song of Songs (Ct 1,12). It is a gesture of love, a pure love of great value, because it springs from his heart and pours on the Guest. It represents the loving and free delivery of our whole being to those who live in a situation of fragility, to those who suffer from a "lack", whose life is threatened with death. Maria lets herself be involved by her body and by her soul in the gesture, and the hair - used by the beloved of the Song of Songs to fall in love with the king - (Ct 7,6) is now impregnated with perfume (see Ct 1,3), which is the answer of grateful love from those who felt loved. It is a love that fills the whole "house", the whole community, because we all are sent to enter the dynamics of gratuitous love, given and received.

A similar gesture of love arouses a reaction that talks about us: Judas is presented as "one of his disciples". The disciples have the capacity to love without measure, like Mary, but also to deliver to death, like the Iscariot. The reference to the traitor's role introduces the question centered on the monetary value of the perfume. Three hundred denari were equivalent to almost a year of work: a real fortune for a poor man! This calculation recalls the usual criticism of the middle class to the poor when you decide to spend for a party: you could use "better" that money, for example to build a house. We almost pretend to know better than the poor what they need most. On the contrary, the poor, like Mary, know well that the feast is possible only where there is an excess of gratuitousness, where nothing shrinks with meanness and offers the best of what is possessed. When instead of the

logic of the gift one we assumes the one of profit, we enter into a dynamic of death, capable of sacrificing the other by reason of a cost-benefit calculation.

The comment of those who narrate underlines the intentions of Judas. It is a constant: when we talk a lot about the poor as an external category, it is because there is really no concern for them. They are used: to give them alms, to reassure their conscience, to feel good by helping them, or - even worse - to hold back what corresponds to them. What truly satisfies the hunger of those in need is sharing, as happened in the multiplication of the loaves (see Jn 6: 9-11). When it is given, multiplication occurs: when it accumulates instead, "capitalization" takes place, which ends up enriching only one, leaving many in hunger.

The answer of Jesus proceeds in two moments. On one side, he links the anointing with his burial: the theme of death reappears, no longer of Lazarus, but of Jesus. But readers, who "see" Lazarus live there, resurrected by Jesus, know that the burial of Jesus can not mean a definitive death, because he himself is "the resurrection and life" (see 11:25). Therefore, the gesture of Mary is not the anointing of a dead person, but the celebration of Life. The love that is given in the community to those in need is always a sign of a life that conquers death. The delivery of oneself saves from death both those who give themselves and those who receive love.

On the second moment of the answer, Jesus states that we will always have the poor with us. This statement, far from indicating a reality of injustice that we could never change, wants to show the concrete composition of every Christian community. The phrase seems to be inspired by Deut. 15:11: "For those in need will never be lacking in the land". It was the reason why Israel was commanded to be in solidarity with the "poor and needy brother". For Jesus the poor are not only always on earth - in their homeland -, but they are always "with" the community, in the midst of it. For the Christian community, symbolized in this group of Bethany - a name that is mostly symbolic - the poor are not "outside", as if they were a reality to be cared for by alms, but they are an integral part of the community, an important part that Jesus identified himself with them. A time will come when they will not have Jesus with them in the same way, because "he will go to the Father" (Jn 16:28), but they will continue to have him in the person of the poor, who will always be his vicar (Mt 25.40).

It can therefore be understood that the sentence of Jesus becomes a criterion of discernment for the Church. Our community will be Christian, like the community of Bethany, if poor people count among its members. Bethany is the Church where the poor are protagonists and builders of the Kingdom. In the person of Judas, as we said, the temptation of many of our communities returns to consider the poor as the object of our charity and, therefore, to consider it outside the community.

Mary assumes in her gesture the concreteness of a dual vocation of the community. On one side, in front of Jesus, the concrete poor, the brother whose life is threatened, she pours her perfume. She does not measure, she does not calculate, she does not establish conditions ... she compromises her body, she knows how to get involved in the meeting. Even today, through the service offered by the community at the feet of the poor, the whole house, the whole universe is filled with the fragrance of the perfume: tenderness "has a pleasant smell".

On the other side, Mary anointing consecrates the feet of Jesus so that he can continue to the end of his path of solidarity with the poor. This is also a function of the community as a body: supporting and encouraging one another in following Jesus, poor and supportive.

Prayer vigil

This poor cries and the Lord listens to him

Suggested Biblical passages: Gen 4, 1-16; Ps 34 (33); Mc 15; Rev 7,9-17

Introduction

The present Vigil is based on the meaning of the word "cry". There are many reasons, both interior and exterior, which cause the cry of the oppressed.

In the first statio the text of the book of Genesis (4, 1-16) wants to gather the cry of innocent blood, of all those who unjustly suffer persecution and death, which are slowly extinguished because of daily suffering.

The guide-passage of Psalm 34 (33), in the second statio, evokes the cry that calls for conversion. It is characterized not only on the cry of the poor, but also on the Lord who hears and saves him. God who seeks to improve the human condition, to console all those who live in spiritual poverty and in despair. The inner discomfort is overcome as the oppressed is touched by Lord's hand.

The third statio represents the cry of Jesus on the cross (Mk 15: 33-37), a cry of total abandonment, of loneliness and of misunderstanding. The Mother of God, who silently accompanies the cry of her Son, is the image of all those who can no longer raise their voices, who are too weak to emit any sound to defend themselves.

In conclusion, in the fourth statio, the text taken from the book of the Apocalypse (7, 9-17) directs the heart towards the horizon of hope of the Christian faith that never disappoints, because it is rooted in the definitive word on the history of man and of the world: the victory of the Risen Lord.

In order to adapt the proposal of Vigil to particular needs of a specific community (parish, hospital chapel, monastery, etc.) different songs can be chosen for each statio. To deepen the recurrent themes in the proposed biblical texts, it is suggested to prepare a meditation or to choose some testimonies, according to the needs and possibilities of the community that celebrates the Vigil. Before the final blessing, a prayer of intercession could be inserted, pronounced by the priest himself or by the faithful, and dedicated to the various situations in which the poor live.

The choice of the biblical passages could also be modified, at the discretion of those organizing the Vigil, to underline other dimensions of a man's cry who reaches the throne of the Most High. For example: Ex 2,23-25; 3,7-9 (the cry of the Israelites, enslaved in the land of Egypt, comes to God); Gdt 4,8-13 (the Israelites raise their cry to God so as not to fall into the hands of enemies); in the Book of Job the images of the suffering person who cries out to the Lord are recurrent (3,24, 16,18,14,14); Is 40: 1-5 (spiritual poverty, disappointment and depression, inner restlessness), Gl 1: 13-20, 2,12-13 (lamentation for a catastrophe, penance and response from the Lord).

The Vigil could be performed with the Blessed Sacrament exposed.

The priest exposes the Blessed Sacrament. A song and a brief introductory exhortation should be followed.

1. The blood of Abel cries - physical and material oppression, injustice, the drama of the oppressed but also of the oppressor

Reading from the Book of Genesis (4, 1-16)

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD." And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground. In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it." Cain said to Abel his brother, "Let us go out to the field." And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him. Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength; you shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth." Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me this day away from the ground; and from thy face I shall be hidden; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will slay me." Then the LORD said to him, "Not so! If any one slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who came upon him should kill him. Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Meditation and / or testimony
songs
Silent prayer

2. This poor cries and the Lord hears him, saves him from all his anguish

Reading from Psalm 34 (33)

*I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.*

*My soul makes its boast in the LORD;
let the afflicted hear and be glad.*

*O magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together!
I sought the LORD, and he answered me,
and delivered me from all my fears.*

*Look to him, and be radiant;
so your faces shall never be ashamed.*

*This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him,
and saved him out of all his troubles.*

*The angel of the LORD encamps
around those who fear him, and delivers them.*

*O taste and see that the LORD is good!
Happy is the man who takes refuge in him!*

*O fear the LORD, you his saints,
for those who fear him have no want!*

*The young lions suffer want and hunger;
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.*

*Come, O sons, listen to me,
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.*

*What man is there who desires life,
and covets many days, that he may enjoy good?*

*Keep your tongue from evil,
and your lips from speaking deceit.*

*Depart from evil, and do good;
seek peace, and pursue it.*

*The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous,
and his ears toward their cry.*

*The face of the LORD is against evildoers,
to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.*

*When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears,
and delivers them out of all their troubles.*

*The LORD is near to the broken hearted,
and saves the crushed in spirit.*

*Many are the afflictions of the righteous;
but the LORD delivers him out of them all.*

*He keeps all his bones;
not one of them is broken.*

*Evil shall slay the wicked;
and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.*

*The LORD redeems the life of his servants;
none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.*

Meditation and / or testimony

Songs

Silent prayer

3. The cry of Jesus on the cross - the cry of abandonment

Reading from the Gospel of Mark (15, 33-37)

And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "E'lo-i, E'lo-i, la'ma sabach-tha'ni?" which means, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "Behold, he is calling Eli'jah." And one ran and, filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Eli'jah will come to take him down." And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed his last.

Meditation and / or testimony

Songs

Silent prayer

4. The saints in heaven - the cry of hope

Reading from the Book of the Apocalypse (7, 9-17)

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!". And all the angels stood round the throne and round the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen." Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and whence have they come?" I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night within his temple; and he who sits upon the throne will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Concluding exhortation summarizing the Vigil and inviting prayer to the Lord:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
Come your kingdom,
thy will be done,
on earth. as it is in heaven.**

Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Psalm of the service

Jesus calls us to be servants, as He is a servant,
because men accept the message of Christ
not so much by those who experience the asceticism of purity
but from those who live every day the tribulations of the service.
Jesus, you who washed the feet of poor fishermen,
help us understand that the feet of the poor
they are the goal of every serious spiritual journey.
When you bent on the heels of your disciples
you made us understand which basilicas
we should address our pilgrimage.
In the beatitudes you told us that the poor are blessed,
that is, those who are saved are the poor.
But then you also added:
'Blessed are you when you help the poor man,
when you give him food or drink,
when you host or visit it.
Therefore the poor are saved
and those who are in solidarity with the poor.
'Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven'.
'Come into the kingdom, blessed, because I was hungry
and you gave me something to eat. "
In other words, you are telling us:
Blessed are those who serve the poor,
those who make common cause with the poor '.
Help us, Jesus, to be so in solidarity with the poor
to be their friends and brothers.
Help us, Jesus, to know you recognize in the poor and the suffering,
so that they may welcome us one day into the house of the Father!
(Don Tonino Bello, bishop)

The priest finishes the vigil.

EUCCHARISTIC BLESSING

Kneeling down, the Eucharistic hymn is sung:

Down in adoration falling,
Lo! the sacred Host we hail;
Lo! o'er ancient forms departing,
newer rites of grace prevail;
faith for all defects supplying,
where the feeble senses fail.

To the everlasting Father,
and the Son who reigns on high,

with the Holy Ghost proceeding
forth from Each eternally,
be salvation, honor, blessing,
might and endless majesty. Amen.

Let's pray.

Lord Jesus Christ,
that in the wonderful sacrament of the Eucharist
you left us the memorial of your Easter,
let us adore the saint with deep faith
mystery of your body and your blood,
to always feel the benefits of redemption in us.
You are God, and live and reign with God the Father,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
for all the centuries.
Amen.

The one who presides imparts the blessing with the Blessed Sacrament.

Acclamation

A reader intones and the assembly repeats:

1. Blessed be God.
2. Blessed be his holy name.
3. Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man.
4. Blessed be the name of Jesus.
5. Blessed be His Most Sacred Heart.
6. Blessed be His most precious Blood.
7. Blessed be Jesus in the most holy Sacrament of the altar.
8. Blessed be the Holy Spirit Paraclete.
9. Blessed be the great Mother of God, Most Holy Mary.
10. Blessed be His Holy and Immaculate Conception.
11. Blessed be His glorious Assumption.
12. Blessed be the name of the Virgin Mary and Mother.
13. Benedict be St. Joseph His most chaste spouse.
14. Blessed be God in His angels and His saints. Amen.

While singing the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, a song is performed.

Marian antiphon

Hail, Holy Queen

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy,
our life, our sweetness and our hope.
To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve.
To thee to we send up our sighs,
mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.
Turn, then, most gracious advocate,
thine eyes of mercy toward us,
and after this, our exile,
show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

Prayer to the B.V.M. of the Poor

Virgin of the Poor, accompany us to Jesus, the only source of grace, and teach us docility to the Holy Spirit, so that the fire of love that came to bring about the coming of the Kingdom might burst forth.

Virgin of the Poor, save the nations: obtain for us to be guided by wise rulers and the grace that all peoples, reconciled to each other and agree, form a single fold under a single shepherd.

Virgin of the Poor, ask for healing for those who suffer, sustain those who serve them with love, give us the grace to belong only to Christ and free us from all danger.

Virgin of the Poor, comfort the sick with your presence; teach us to carry our daily cross with Jesus and let us commit ourselves loyally to the service of the poor and the suffering.

Virgin of the Poor, intercede with your Son and obtain for us all the graces necessary for our salvation, for that of our families, those who recommend themselves to our prayers and to all humanity.

Virgin of the Poor, we believe in you and, trusting in your motherly intercession, we abandon ourselves to your protection.

We entrust to you the path that the Church is going through in this third millennium, the moral and spiritual growth of the young, the religious, priestly and missionary vocations and the work of the new evangelization.

Virgin of the Poor, who said: "Believe in me, I will believe in you", we thank you for putting your trust in us. Make us capable of choices in conformity with the Gospel, help us to manage our freedom in mutual service and in the love of Christ for the glory of the Father.

Virgin of the Poor, fill us with graces, give us your blessing and transform our lives. Let no one let himself be subjugated by slavery and sin, but be consecrated to Christ, the one Lord.

Virgin of the Poor, Mother of the Savior, Mother of God, we thank you for your availability to the divine will that, in its goodness, has given us the Redeemer.

We thank you for listening to our invocations by presenting them to Jesus, the only mediator. Teach us to bless the Father in every circumstance of our existence and to live fruitfully the Eucharist, food of eternal life.

Virgin of the Poor, we present our intentions so that you may intercede with the Lord, obtaining every grace and blessing, according to his will and your maternal mediation.
Amen.

INVOCATION TO THE VIRGIN OF THE POOR

Virgin of the Poor, accompany us to Jesus, source of grace.

Virgin of the Poor, save the nations.

Virgin of the Poor, from relief to the sick.

Virgin of the Poor, relieves suffering.

Virgin of the Poor, pray for each of us.
Virgin of the Poor, we believe in you. Virgin of the Poor, believe in us.
Virgin of the Poor, we will pray a lot.
Virgin of the Poor, give us your blessing.
Virgin of the Poor, Mother of the Savior Mother of God, thank you!

(from the Novena to the Madonna of the poor of Banneux)

PRAYER OF THE POOR

FATHER, I am poor and as a poor I ask you:
grant me the grace to be joyful in my poverty,
to be capable of silence, listening to those who are poorer than me,
to exult in the joy of being poor with and for every poor person,
as Your Son and my Brother Jesus,
and to do only Your will.

JESUS CHRIST, help us to understand the bliss of meekness,
to answer and help to make me feel free everyone and every oppressed brother,
without making distinction of color, race or religion.
A humble Master who dwells hidden in every abandoned,
in the despised child, in the elderly alone,
in the homeless family without bread,
in the refugee migrant,
in the addict and in the prostitute,
in the young man looking for a road,
in every person most in need of us,
we pray for all of these, for all of us:
remember that we are one in you, your only body,
open our eyes, heal our wounds
and then, in all and in all, we will find the opportunity
to recognize and love you,
delivering us too as you, broken and shared bread.

HOLY SPIRIT, You are able to move and renew everything, make us more loving, more
welcoming, closer. May our testimony of life inspire other hearts to overcome hypocrisy,
insensitivity, indifference and hatred with the same love that unites Jesus to the Father.

HOLY TRINITY, endless love, let us know how to respond to the cry of the poor with hope, with a
smile, with perfect joy, and we can serve you, praise, adore and love in every free and merciful
gesture through the silent and constant invocation of Your Holy Name. Amen.

PRAYER FOR POORS

Lord Jesus,
made poor to enrich ourselves with your poverty,
listen to our prayer.
For the cold of the nativity scene and Christmas night,
remember those who do not have a worthy abode.
For the fear and insecurity of the flight to Egypt,
remember migrants and refugees.
For the years of poverty lived Nazareth,
remember many men and women

that I do not earn enough to support our families.
For the pain you caused to Mary and Joseph when you stayed in the temple,
remember parents whose children got lost in the evil ways
or who have been kidnapped by the most terrible reasons.
For violence, injustice, hypocrisy, hatred
of whom you have been an innocent victim,
make us understand the bliss of meekness.
of justice, mercy and peace.
For the terrible hours in Calvary,
remember those who lie without health and without resources in their pain bed.
Through the intercession of Mary, Your Mother,
who sang the efficacy of Providence on the humble and the hungry,
help us to overcome our insensitivity and indifference.
All the poor experience that through us, disciples of the Risen Lord,
the promise is fulfilled: "I will always be with you".
Amen.

(Franciscan Sisters of Divine Providence - Mission of East Timor - Community: Oe-cusse and Dili)

Proposals for the celebration of the World Day of the Poor

In preparation for World Poor Day

On the journey towards the Second World Day of the Poor, we could think of organizing moments of *preparation* for the event to be held in parishes, in the dioceses, in Catholic associations, but also in schools and universities.

Preparation for World Day could be divided into three phases following the three verbs of Psalm 37, *shouting, answering and freeing*, proposed in the Message of Pope Francis entitled "This poor cries and the Lord hears him" (remembering the three moments - see , judge and act - of ethical discernment according to the Social Doctrine of the Church).

Crying: we could organize opportunities to listen to the voice of those living in poverty, to give the floor and listen to the testimonies of the homeless, migrants fleeing war and hunger, of the father of a family who has lost his job and can not keep the family, of the elderly who spend their days in the solitude of their home, etc.

Answering: after listening to the testimony of our brothers and sisters living in difficult conditions, we could organize *moments of community sharing and reflection*, parish and diocesan, but also in schools, **to respond, in the sense of participating, to pain and suffering of the poor and feeling compassion for the injury to his human dignity**. This meeting could also be an opportunity to reflect on the form of poverty that is closer to us and therefore more "uncomfortable" and difficult to help, as well as the fact that none of us is "immune" from poverty: we are all "immersed" in many forms of poverty".

Liberate: faced with the human drama of poverty, Christians and all men of good will can not remain helpless, but must try to commit themselves to **free** their brothers and sisters from the condition of poverty that does not allow them to fully enjoy the fundamental human rights and to open up to integral human development. In this third phase, parishes, dioceses, Catholic associations and schools can give life to initiatives, also lasting over time, to concretely seek to alleviate the harsh conditions of life of our most vulnerable brothers because they are destitute.

It could be particularly important to carry out a **work of awareness on the themes of poverty and preparation for World Day in schools**, it represents an important opportunity for evangelization.

Living the 2nd World Day of the Poor 2018

For the celebration of the Second World Day of the Poor, Sunday 18 November could be arranged:

- a) the Sunday liturgy so that the presence of the poor emerges. These could perform the liturgical service, read the readings, collect the offers and bring the gifts to the altar;
- b) one of the prayers present in the *Sussidio* could be reproduced as a picture that could also be distributed to the poor as a reminder of the Day;
- c) organizing *symbolic acts*, concrete works of mercy towards the indigent and marginalized brothers; for example, lunch with the poor in the parishes, in some families;
- d) suggesting a *special collection* for the Day to be devolved to a concrete work that is visible and that recalls the *Second World Day of the Poor*;
- e) *involving children and young people* in the celebration of the World Day of the Poor with concrete apostolic works. In fact, the daily busy life, especially in the big cities, has made us lose the habit of charitable works, good works, gestures of closeness to the poor. The World Day could be an opportunity to introduce and bring the youngest to the works of mercy.



LOGO OF THE WOORL POOR'S DAY

The dimension of reciprocity is reflected in the logo of the World Day of the Poor. You notice an open door and two people are found on the edge. Both tend the hand; one because he asks for help, the other because he intends to offer it. In fact, it is difficult to understand who is the true poor between the two. Or rather, both are poor. Those who hold their hands to enter ask for sharing; who extends his hand to help is invited to go out to share. They are two outstretched hands that meet where each offers something. Two arms that express solidarity and that provoke not to remain on the threshold, but to go towards the other. The poor can enter the house, once it is understood that the help is sharing. The words that Pope Francis writes in the Message become ever more expressive in this context: "Blessed are the hands that open to welcome the poor and to help them: they are hands that bring hope. Blessed are the hands that overcome every barrier of culture, religion and nationality by pouring consolation oil on the wounds of

humanity. Blessed are the hands that open without asking for anything in return, without "if", without "but" and without "perhaps": they are hands that bring down the brothers' blessing of God "(Pope Francis).

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