

A Prayer in Solidarity with all People Living in Poverty

Let us gather and open our hearts to prayer. Prepare the room and create a space of calm and reflection. Center yourself with the breathing prayer below.

Breathing prayer to center ourselves - (Do it for at least one minute)

Join your breath to this antiphon: "Here I am, God, to do your Will."

You exhale: "Here I am, God." You inhale: "to do your Will." Prayer

God of Justice, open our eyes to see *you* in the faces of those in poverty. *Open* our ears to hear you in the cries of those exploited. Open our mouths to defend each *person's* dignity and human rights. Open our hearts and hands to give to those in *need*. *Remind* us, that what we do to the least ones, we do to you. Amen

Reading

Between the end of Christmas and the beginning of ordinary time, we are invited to contemplate Jesus, in his family life growing up in Nazareth. In St Luke's Gospel chapter 2, 51 - 52 we read "Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." What were the experiences and influences that shaped the person of Jesus? No doubt the love of Mary and Joseph in their relationship with each other and with the adolescent Jesus was a big influence. Who were their neighbours and what was their relationship with them? What did Jesus learn about God from the scriptures, from the Priests in the temple, and in prayer? What did Jesus learn in the carpenter's shop? St John Eudes believed that if we contemplate Jesus in the first 30 years of his life - 'his hidden life' - we will learn some of the things he learned about God, and God's care for the people and that we will start to have the same thoughts and attitudes within ourselves. What were the influences that formed Jesus such that at his Baptism in the Jordan he declared: "The Spirit of the God is on me, because God has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. God has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoner and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of God's favor." (Luke 4, 18-19)

Pause for reflection - 2 minutes



The message of Pope Francis for the Fourth World Day of the Poor, observed on 15th November, 2020 called on people to keep their gaze fixed on the poor, especially during the Covid- 19 Pandemic. The theme of the day was “Stretch forth your hand to the poor”, taken from the book of Sirach, 7:32. Drawing 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 that even amid hardship we must continue to trust in God.” The Pope stresses that “prayer to God and solidarity with the poor and suffering are inseparable,” and notes that “time devoted to prayer can never become

an alibi for neglecting our neighbour in need.” “The ability to stretch forth our hand shows that we possess an innate capacity to act in ways that give meaning to life. How many outstretched hands do we see every day! Sadly, it is more and more the case that the frenetic pace of life sucks us into a whirlwind of indifference, to the point that we no longer know how to recognize the good silently being done each day and with great generosity all around us. Only when something happens that upsets the course of our lives do our eyes become capable of seeing the goodness of the saints `next door`, of “those who, living in our midst, reflect God’s presence” (*Gaudete et Exsultate*, 7), but without fanfare.”

Time for Sharing:

What causes you to wonder as you read and hear these texts? Did the message of Sirach ‘Stretch forth your hand to the poor’ influence Jesus in his growth and development? What are you called to do?

Hymn - *The Lord Hears the Cry of the Poor* Michael John Talbot

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QI9h7B8L71U> or other appropriate hymn according to language and culture

[Chorus]

The Lord hears the cry of the poor

Blessed be the Lord

The Lord hears the cry of the poor
Blessed be the Lord

I will bless the Lord at all times
With praise ever in my mouth
Let my soul glory in the Lord
Who will hear the cry of the poor

[Verse 2]

Let the lowly hear and be glad
The Lord listens to their plea
And to hearts broken God is near
Who will hear the cry of the poor

Concluding Prayer:

Stretch out your hands - one raised towards God asking for mercy and the other other toward people in poverty in a gesture of giving and pray:

God in this gesture of prayer and solidarity may we experience your closeness, and filled with the Spirit may we, like Jesus, be moved towards people in poverty in deeds of kindness while seeking justice and advocacy for the implementation of their human rights. Amen

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