

Pastoral Aid for the Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

(2nd World Day of the Poor)

November 18, 2018

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Reflection on the [Sunday Readings](#)

Introduction:

- When we hear the word “poverty,” we can think of many things: poverty of spirit, lack of love, isolation, etc. On World Day of the Poor, Pope Francis invites us to focus on material poverty in which individuals, families, and communities lack access to the basic things they need to live and thrive: nutritious food, adequate housing, safe neighborhoods, good education, healthcare, and decent jobs with fair pay, for example.
- *[Insert a story from your community—what families are experiencing in your parish, a recent human interest story about poverty from a local news source, etc. This is your chance to connect today’s homily with the real faces and people in your community. If a local story is not possible, you can instead use the following text to encourage people to think of their own example.]* An estimated 43 million people live in poverty in the United States.
 - Take a moment to think about one person or one family you know, who has been affected by poverty or related issues such as unemployment, debt, lack of quality health insurance, etc.
 - Or, you might call to mind the faces of an individual or family that our parish serves through *[mention a ministry of the parish that serves those in need]*. What daily challenges do they face?
- Today is the second World Day of the Poor, a day established by Pope Francis on which he asks us to hear the cries of the poor among us with open ears and hearts and to respond in faith as we work for justice.

First Reading (Dn 12:1-3); **Psalm** (16:5, 8, 9-10, 11); **Second Reading** (Heb 10:11-14, 18), and **Gospel** (Mk 13:24-32)

- This Sunday’s readings remind us of God’s promise of fulfillment to a people in waiting.
- In the **first reading**, Daniel predicts the fulfillment of the promises of God. Written near the end of the reign of a strongly disliked ruler of Judea, Daniel’s depiction of the “end times” conveys a fulfillment of God’s promises to the people of Israel.
 - All who have been faithful will be relieved of their suffering and receive the Kingdom as was promised to God’s chosen people. Verse 3 clarifies that it is those who have been steadfast in their faith, the “wise” who “shall shine brightly.” Remaining faithful to God demands more than simply following the law; it also

demands bringing ourselves and our neighbors to righteousness: “those who lead the many to justice shall be like the stars forever” (v. 3).

- The **Psalmist** also speaks of God’s promise to those who are faithful; it is the Lord who shows us “the path to life” (v. 11). In the **second reading**, the author of the Letter to the Hebrews encourages readers to live in confidence of the promise of Christ, who is “at the right hand of God” (v. 12) and to strive to imitate him (v. 14).
- In today’s **Gospel**, Mark recounts Jesus’ parable of the fig tree to speak of signs of hope. Despite all the problems and sufferings of life, grace will triumph (v. 26-27). Until that time, the faithful are to remain committed to the promises of Christ (v. 32).
- Taken together, the readings urge Christ’s followers to live each day as faithful disciples, ready for his coming. But how can we, as disciples, be ready and prepared?
- First, we can call to mind what Jesus called the two greatest commandments: love for God and love for our neighbors. We can take to heart Pope Francis’ challenge on this 2nd World Day of the Poor to “make a serious examination of conscience, to see if we are truly capable of hearing the cry of the poor” ([Message for 2nd World Day of the Poor](#), no. 2).
- *Do we hear the “cry of the poor?”* Inspired by Psalm 34:6, “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him,” Pope Francis challenges us to combat our indifference to the poor and vulnerable in our midst. We say that we want to serve the needs of our brothers and sisters, but as Pope Francis warns, “If we speak too much ourselves, we will be unable to hear them” (no. 2). If we remain steadfast in our faith and live our lives as righteous followers of Christ, we will know that “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” (no. 4).
- On this 2nd World Day of the Poor, we are asked to embody God’s promise of justice and liberation, to act in ways that ensure that the cries of the poor among us are heard: “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 . . . to lead everyone to God and to holiness” (no. 7).

Application:

- How are we called to apply these lessons? Think back to *[insert earlier example from introduction]* that we called to mind earlier. How can we respond to Pope Francis’ call, and hear the cries of the poor in our parish, our neighborhood, and our communities on this World Day of the Poor?
- In addition to being the 2nd World Day of the Poor, this Sunday is also the collection, taken today around the country, to support the work of the [Catholic Campaign for Human Development](#), or CCHD. This collection supports the work of groups that empower low-income people to participate in decisions that affect their lives and break the cycle of poverty. Many of the projects supported by CCHD embody the corporal works of mercy and include protecting worker rights, expanding access to health care, and reforming the criminal justice system. This national collection is the primary source

of funding for CCHD's anti-poverty grants and education programs aimed at fostering a culture of life and hope in communities across the nation. Twenty-five percent of funds collected remain in each diocese to support local projects.

- Here is an example of the kind of work this collection supports. *[Note to homilist: Select one of the stories below most relevant to your parish, or instead use a local example of work that CCHD supports in your diocese. Consult the [PovertyUSA map](#) (Search by state with the dropdown menu) to see groups that CCHD funds in your diocese.]*
 - **Example 1: Stable housing** is often one of the first steps for someone trying to break out of the cycle of poverty. In Portland, Oregon, the cost to rent an apartment or buy a property has increased beyond what is possible for low and moderate-income families. This has created a housing crisis leaving many people unable to find an affordable place to live. But with your support, working families can afford to live in their community and their homes can remain affordable for generations to come. Through homebuyer support provided by CCHD funded groups, over 330 low and moderate-income people now have homes and financial stability, bringing lasting change to their lives.
 - **Example 2:** In Los Angeles, many people struggle to find housing in their communities. There are many who find themselves homeless or displaced. Without the stability of safe and **affordable housing**, many are forced to continue living trapped in the cycle of poverty. But with your support, People Organized for Westside Renewal in Los Angeles (POWER LA) develops leaders and assists them in creating change in their communities. Your support helps POWER LA identify local leaders to lead campaigns that range from combating unfair fees to forming new policies.
 - **Example 3:** Affordable and **safe housing** is one of the keys to creating stability for those trying to break free from the cycle of poverty. The Dudley Street neighborhood in Boston, unfortunately, had many open lots that attracted crime and inappropriate public behavior. Concerned about public safety, the residents called a public meeting to discuss what they could do with one particular site. With your support of CCHD, this community advocated for change in their community and highlighted the need for affordable housing with the help of The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative. Now the City of Boston is working with the community to lead a planning effort to determine a future for the site that will better serve the community.
- Pope Francis writes in his World Day of the Poor message: "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 center of the Church's pilgrim way' (Evangelii Gaudium, 198) . . . 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" (no. 6).
- This echoes the reflection in Pope Francis's recent apostolic exhortation, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, on the role of the community in the journey to holiness: "A community that

cherishes the little details of love, whose members care for one another and create an open and evangelizing environment, is a place where the risen Lord is present, sanctifying it in accordance with the Father's plan" (no. 145).

- Together, we can open our ears and our hearts to the cries of the poor and respond with a "loving attentiveness" (Evangeli Gaudium, 199) that honors the person as such and seeks out his or her best interests" (Message for 2nd World Day of the Poor, 3). I ask you to support today's collection with generosity!

Quotes from Pope Francis' [Message for the Second World Day of the Poor](#)

"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 Savior" (no. 1).

"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" (no. 2).

"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" (no. 3).

"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" (no. 4).

"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 center 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 (no. 7).

"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)" (no. 9).

Bulletin Announcement

Respond to Pope Francis' call for the 2nd World Day of the Poor. Please be generous in this week's second collection for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development. In the United States, one in seven people lives in poverty. With this collection, you support programs that address the causes of poverty and provide a sustainable future for those who are struggling across the country. In addition, 25 percent of funds collected remain in our diocese to fund local anti-poverty projects. Please prayerfully consider how you can support this collection and work on the margins. More information about the Catholic Campaign for Human Development can be found at www.usccb.org/cchd/collection.

The announcement is also available [en Español](#).

Bulletin Insert

Use [this bulletin insert](#) (bilingual) to help inform Catholics in your parish about the Church's response to poverty in the U.S. through the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.

Parish Activity Suggestions

- **Share this audio message.** In your parish foyer, play [this video message](#) before and after masses to educate parishioners about the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the domestic anti-poverty campaign of the United States Catholic bishops.
- **Distribute a prayer card.** Distribute the Catholic Campaign for Human Development prayer card, featuring the [Prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe for Justice](#) (also [en Español](#)), to help individuals and families pray about how God is calling them to respond to poverty.
- **Invite a speaker.** Work with your [diocesan coordinator for CCHD](#) to host a speaker who can share for a few minutes at the end of Mass about the work of a local organization that receives funding from CCHD.
- **Host a panel discussion about poverty, local and global.** Invite representatives from community organizations as well as parishioners who volunteer or work with those affected by poverty.

Prayers of the Faithful

Also [en Español](#).

R/. Lord, hear our prayer.

For our Holy Father, Pope Francis, our bishop, **N.**, and all church leaders, that they will continue to proclaim Christ's love and compassion for those in poverty, and that the Church will continue to teach about the need to work for justice in our world, let us pray to the Lord. **R/.**

For the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, for all who work to address poverty in this country, and for our parish community, that all may follow Christ's example of love and solidarity with persons who are poor, let us pray to the Lord. *R/.*

For the people of God, that we will open our hearts and souls to justice so that we will speak and act in ways that will eliminate poverty and injustice in this country and throughout the world, let us pray to the Lord. *R/.*

For the 43 million people in our country who experience the pain and suffering of poverty every day, that Christians may join with them to share their burden and at the same time work to create more just communities, let us pray to the Lord. *R/.*