



World Day of the Poor Virtual Vigil

13 November, 2021

Caritas Internationalis

From Prayer to Action: A Celebration of the
World Day of the Poor & World Youth Day

OPENING REFLECTION

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On this 5th World Day of the Poor, we have once again decided to join Pope Francis and the entire Catholic Community in prayer and celebration. Once again we remind ourselves that this is a World Day *of* the Poor, not a World Day *for* the Poor – and this makes a difference. It means that they will be at the centre and that we will use this opportunity to learn from them, give them a voice and **let ourselves be evangelized by them as Pope Francis pointed out in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel). They have the experience of the suffering Christ, he insisted!**

At the inaugural Mass of his Pontificate on 13 March 2013, the World Day of the Poor was institutionalized. Since then it has been celebrated on the 33rd Sunday of the year. **The message of the World Day of the Poor is this: it is the day of the poor, when we should realize that they are undeniably part of our communities and even part of our own lives.** It is not a World Day *for* the Poor, where they would be entitled to receive yet another package of aid.

The message for this year is, “The Poor you will always have among you.”

The gift the poor are entitled to on this Day of the Poor, is that they are equally part of God’s human family, all sheep of the one flock, and that all should recognize them as such, and treat them accordingly. In the Caritas history, we have seen a shift from ‘**for the poor**’ to ‘**with the poor**’, but including as well ‘**as the poor**’. As they say in Spanish: **por los pobres, con los pobres, como los pobres.** The Poor will teach us how.

On this World Day of the Poor, let us truly share, not just give; let us truly embrace, not just meet. So that the Living God will always be among us on our common journey. As the Holy Father concludes his message: ‘*How evangelical it would be if we could say with all truth: we too are poor, because only in this way will we truly be able to recognize them, to make them part of our lives and an instrument of our salvation.*’

Together, young and old, men and women, let us unite in prayer to nourish our action to contribute to building flourishing communities in the name of Jesus who came so that they have life and have it to the full.

PRAYERS

We pray for the Church, for its people and for its clergy. In particular, we pray for the poor in the world. May they teach us to support and love each other in the way Jesus taught us. We pray for stronger faith and courage for all people to follow Jesus in whatever way he calls us, for the grace to act always with a generosity of spirit, and that our relationships as members of one human family may be nourished with love.

Lord, in your mercy

All: *Hear our prayer.*

Lord, instil in us and all people an understanding of the importance of fraternal love and solidarity, especially towards women and other marginalised groups who in the past and still today have been “silenced and suffer violence.” We ask for the grace to see the unique gifts of each individual person so that we can better promote equal opportunities for leadership and participation of women at all levels in society. We are thankful for the progress made towards achieving equality in societies across the world. In the spirit of integral and holistic development, we ask you to help us to know that prayers and actions must work hand in hand to bring about change.

Lord in your mercy,

All: *Hear our prayer.*

Lord, help us to always see you in the faces of the poor. Help us to serve them without hesitation or thought of personal gain; help us to accompany them to take control of their own lives and lift themselves out of poverty; and help us to defend them so that their voices are always heard clearly in our societies, in our Church, and in our governments. And in doing so, help us to know you better.

Lord in your mercy,

All: *Hear our prayer.*

We give thanks for the youth who serve their communities. May they use their gifts of energy and creativity to serve the poor and to care for the earth – and may these gifts be accepted and welcomed by everyone, so that caring for one’s community and for creation can be a rich and rewarding intergenerational experience. Guide them and protect them in their work, and may they never tire of seeking new ways to serve and to be the hands and feet of Christ in our world.

Lord in your mercy

All: *Hear our prayer.*

2021 WORLD DAY OF THE POOR MESSAGE: PASSAGES FOR REFLECTION

The following passages are taken from Pope Francis' message for the 2021 World Day of the Poor. We encourage you to read and reflect on them, and unite yourself in prayer with the poor in your community and around the world.

The poor, always and everywhere, evangelize us, because they enable us to discover in new ways the true face of the Father. They have much to teach us. They know the suffering of Christ through their own sufferings. It is necessary that we all let ourselves be evangelized by them. (WDP Message, 2)

None are so poor that they cannot give something of themselves in mutual exchange. The poor cannot be only those who receive; they must be put in a position to give, because they know well how to respond with generosity. True, they may be people who lack some things, often many things, including the bare necessities, yet they do not lack everything, for they retain the dignity of God's children that nothing and no one can take away from them. (WDP Message, 6)

The poor you will always have with you" (Mk 14:7). This is a summons never to lose sight of every opportunity to do good. (WDP Message, 8)

The poor are present in our midst. How evangelical it would be if we could say with all truth: we too are poor, because only in this way will we truly be able to recognize them, to make them part of our lives and an instrument of our salvation. (WDP Message, 9)

