

THE PRAYER OF THE POOR GOES UP TO GOD

17 NOVEMBER 2024



On November 17, 2024, we celebrate the **VIII's World Day of the Poor** and Pope Francis has chosen a particularly significant theme for this year dedicated to prayer, and in the proximity of the beginning of the Ordinary Jubilee of 2025:

"The prayer of the poor rises up to God" (cf. Si 21,5).

Pope Francis invites us all to learn to pray for the poor and to pray alongside them, with humility and trust.

It is an opportunity to become aware of the presence of the poor in our cities and communities, and to understand their needs. God listens to the prayers of the poor and, in the face of their suffering, is "impatient" until justice is done for them.

The Pope reiterates that the poor have a privileged place in the heart of God, who is attentive and close to each one of them, and we ask ourselves:

What place do the poor occupy in our hearts?

Are we attentive and close to them?

Brief silence.

We listen to reality...



There are 165 million **more** poor people in the world.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) published a new report last year indicating that, between 2020 and 2023, 165 million more people had fallen below the poverty line. The UN emphasizes that the situation has escalated in recent years amid a crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Of them, 75 million are in extreme poverty.[1]

The concerning outlook means that more than 20% of the global population, around 1.65 billion citizens, currently live on less than \$3.65 per day, struggling to secure food on a daily basis. And those in extreme poverty try to survive on an average of 2.15 dollars a day.

Amid the consequences of the crises, the increases in interest rates make poorer nations now spend double or triple their income on debt servicing, compared to the richer ones. And about 2.3 times more in interest payments than in social assistance. "Particularly for low-income countries, the debt burden has become unsustainable," as Steiner pointed out.[2] Among the possible measures to address the increase in poverty, the United Nations urged the world's finance ministers to grant poor countries "a pause" in debt payments. This means that a government will no longer be able to pay its teachers, employ more doctors and nurses in hospitals, and will not be able to provide medicines for rural health centers. The UN highlights that all 165 million additional people in poverty are in low-income or lower-middle-income countries.



The situation is "alarming."

[1] ONU, Informe "El costo humano de la inacción: pobreza, protección social y servicio de la deuda (2020-2023)"

[2] Achim, Steiner, director ejecutivo del Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente (PNUMA).



We listen and if we have the chance, we watch the video-song:

Friend of the poor <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s9bi27tYMGg>

We listen to the Word...

*"The proud despises the humble, the rich despises the needy." The rich man stumbles, and his neighbor supports him; the poor man stumbles, and his neighbor pushes him: the rich man speaks, and many approve, and even if he speaks nonsense, they congratulate him; the poor man makes a mistake and is filled with reproaches; he speaks correctly and is ignored; the rich man speaks, and they listen to him in silence, and praise his talent to the skies; the poor man speaks, and they say: who is he?, and if he falls, they push him down further... **The prayer of the poor rises to God, and God grants him justice immediately.**" (Si 13, 21-23. 21,5).*

We listen to the Church... Message for the VIII World Day of the Poor



- "The Christian hope also embraces the certainty that our prayer reaches the presence of God; but not just any prayer: the prayer of the poor!" Let's reflect on this Word and "read it" in the faces and stories of the poor we encounter, so that prayer may be a way to enter into communion with them and share their suffering.[1]
- "The poor have a privileged place in the heart of God." God sees and cares for each one of them, while those who seek wealth at the expense of the most needy are poor in the eyes of the Lord. Happiness is not acquired by trampling on the rights and dignity of others.[2]
- "God knows the sufferings of His children because He is a caring and solicitous Father to all." As a Father, take care of those who need it most: the poor, the marginalized, those who suffer, the forgotten. But no one is excluded from His heart, for before Him, we are all poor and in need. We are all beggars, because without God we would be nothing.[3]
- "Each Christian and each community are called to be instruments of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, so that they can fully integrate into society; this means we must be docile and attentive to listen to the cry of the poor and assist them." [4]
- "To the poor who live in our cities and are part of our communities, I say: do not lose hope!" God is attentive to each one of you and is by your side[5].



[1] Mensaje para la VIII Jornada Mundial de los pobres, n° 1.

[2] Mensaje para la VIII Jornada Mundial de los pobres, n° 4

[3] Mensaje para la VIII Jornada Mundial de los pobres, n° 4

[4] Exhortación Apostólica Evangelii Gaudium, n° 187

[5] Mensaje para la VIII Jornada Mundial de los pobres, n° 6

We listened to Fr. Claret:

"The reason is that, as I have said, I have such a tender and compassionate heart that I cannot see a misfortune, a misery without helping it; I will take the bread out of my mouth to give it to the poor, and I will even refrain from putting it in my mouth to keep it and give it when asked, and I feel scruples about spending on myself, remembering that there are needs to be remedied." (Aut. PC No. 10).



"For the poor, I bought a farm in the city of Port-au-Prince... The plan for this work was to gather poor boys and girls, many of whom get lost on the streets begging for alms." And there they were to be provided with food and clothing and taught Religion, reading, writing, etc., ... and then an art or trade, whichever they wished." PC No. 563-564)

and to María Antonia París:

María Antonia asked the Claretian Missionaries to "work for their brothers and neighbors...", always having "open hands...." Giving with a long hand as the Mother Prioress decreed..." [1]

"We commit ourselves to living effective poverty in the spirit of the Beatitudes, with such detachment from all goods that, without seeking material reward for our work, we show a preference for the poorest and humblest." [2]



[1] *Constituciones 1869, Trat. I, cap. 2, n° 24- 26.*

[2] *Constituciones 1869, Trat. I, cap. 34, n° 26.*

I commit... The power of small gestures

The writer, Eduardo Galeano, said: "Many small people, in small places, doing small things, can change the world." This reminds us of the ability we have to change things through small gestures and actions. The key is to add up. This is how Jesus, the Apostles, and our founders taught us.

On the way to the Holy Year, the Pope asks each of us to "*become pilgrims of hope, offering concrete signs for a better future*" and asks us not to neglect "the small details of love," such as "**knowing how to stop, approach, give a little attention, a smile, a caress, a word of comfort.**"

What will be my little act of love for this day and the rest of the year?

We ask Jesus not to neglect the small details when it comes to the poor:

R/ Jesus, don't neglect the little details of love

1. In a fragmented and divided world, may love find a way to bring harmony, peace, and unity. R/

2. In a world of economic extremes, may love find a way to eradicate the poverty and injustice. R/

3. In a world where some consume more than they need, may love find a pathway to practicing a simple, supportive, and sustainable lifestyle. R/

4. In a world of spiritual poverty, superficiality, and material excess, may love open paths of depth by dedicating time to inner silence and personal prayer to listen to the presence of God within us. R/

5. In a world where selfishness, self-interest, and indifference prevail, may love find the path that leads to the common good, to being sensitive to the needs of others and not turning a blind eye. R/

6. In a world where there is much humanity wounded by job insecurity, by the violation of rights, by the lack of opportunities for improvement, may love find a way to bring fullness of life to everyone. R/

7. In a world of increasing surveillance across borders, may love find a way to connect hearts, energies, and solidarity efforts. R/

8. In a world globalized in the economy, in consumption, in culture, may love find a way to also globalize solidarity and social justice. R/

9. In a world where ending hunger, social inequalities, and environmental degradation seem unattainable, may love find a path to a solution. R/

Final prayer... Prayer for the poor

God of justice, open our eyes

so that we can see you on the face of the poor.

Open our ears, so that we may hear you in the cries of the oppressed,

Open our mouths, so that we may defend you in public and in private.

Remind us that what we do to the little ones,

we do it for you. Amen.

