

Eradication of Poverty

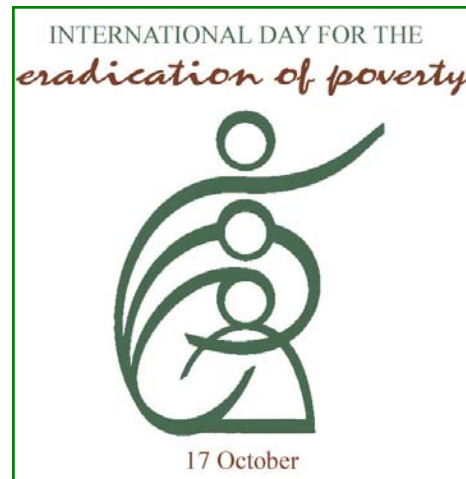
October, 2008

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew

Who are the poor among us today?

Silent Reflection

How do I reach out to the poor?
How do we reach out to the poor?
What difference do we make?



Prayers of Intercession

All respond: Lord, fill us with your spirit, and give us grace to follow you in every way.



Closing Prayer:

Lord of Life,

Open our eyes to make us:

Aware of the poverty suffered by others;

Aware of the immorality of allowing that suffering to take place;

Aware of our rights as citizens to be heard;

Aware of the men, women and children dying as we speak;

Aware that our solidarity gives us strength;

Aware that our leaders may turn a deaf ear but Almighty God hears our cry;

And aware that only together can we: Make Poverty History.

Give us the strength and determination to work towards solutions and policy changes that can free our sisters and brothers around the world from the chains of poverty. Inspire us to challenge our leaders to make debt relief and fighting poverty a priority, and make our voices loud and clear. *Amen.*

Notes for using this prayer:

Please feel free to make adaptations to this prayer to meet the needs of your learning community. You may decide to add music before, during or after the pieces that are outlined here. Other materials needed:

- ✓ A copy of the 1st page of this document for each participant
- ✓ A leader of the prayer and additional readers if you decide to use them for the various parts.
- ✓ A copy of the content below for the leader and/or readers.
- ✓ You may want to put together a simple PowerPoint Presentation of how your learning community reaches out to "the least ones". It could be played during the reading of the Gospel or during the time for silent reflection. You may also want to add to the prayers of intercession to meet the needs of your particular locale.

Statistics are taken from www.MakePovertyHistory.org

The closing prayer is attributed to Cardinal Keith Patrick O'Brien, Archbishop of Saint Andrews and Edinburgh.

www.educationforjustice.org provided ideas on which to base the prayers of intercession.

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew:

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"

The Gospel of the Lord.

(MT 25:30-40)

Who are the poor among us today?

What do you think are the most important things needed in life? A mobile phone? A car?

What about things like enough food to eat, going to school, or making friends?

Lots of people all around the world don't even have the basics. How many?

- One billion people, that's a sixth of the world's population, lives on less than 65p (or a dollar) a day
- 600 million children live in absolute poverty. This means that only their minimum levels of food, clothing and shelter can be met
- Every year more than 10 million children die of hunger and preventable diseases – one every three seconds
- 100 million children miss out on school completely
- The poorest countries' share of world trade is less than half a percent
- Every day, the world's poorest countries pay over 30 million British pounds (over 54 million US dollars) in debt repayments to rich countries
- It would cost around 3 billion British pounds a year to pay for every child in the world to go to school - less than what the people of the United States spend annually on ice cream
- Over 20 years ago, rich countries promised to give 0.7% of their income to poor countries to help them develop, but to date none of the richest countries have kept their promise
- A child born today in Norway, one of the richest countries, can expect to live until they are 79 years old.
- A child born today in Zambia, one of the very poorest countries, can expect to live until they are 32 years old.

In 2004 Pope John Paul II declared: "The conditions of extreme poverty afflicting many millions of people are a cause of grave concern to the international community. The Church, committed to a 'preferential option for the poor,' naturally shares in that concern and strongly supports the goal of halving the number of people living in poverty by the year 2015."

In 2005 Nelson Mandela reminded us: "Poverty is not natural. It is manmade and can be eradicated and overcome by the actions of human beings. Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity, it is a matter of justice, of protecting the fundamental human right to dignity and a decent life,"

We've heard Jesus' words "What ever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

Let us take a few moments to ask God to open our minds and hearts to see what we can do for the least ones.

Prayers of Intercession:

Our response is: Lord, fill us with your spirit, and give us grace to follow you in every way.

Leader: We pray for the marginalized, the forgotten, those without power. Not mercy alone, but justice also, demands that we defend the least among us. (Lord, fill us....)

Leader: We praise you, God, for creating all humans, rich and poor, in your own holy image. Teach us to heal the structural injustices which rob your children of dignity and life. (Lord, fill us....)

Leader: God, give us wisdom and will to work out your vision for the world, in which all people have enough for their daily needs. (Lord, fill us....)

Leader: We pray for those who, because of economic oppression, face hunger and destitution despite their hard labor. (Lord, fill us....)

Leader: We are able to reduce poverty in the world. We pray for the resolve and vision to do so. (Lord, fill us....)