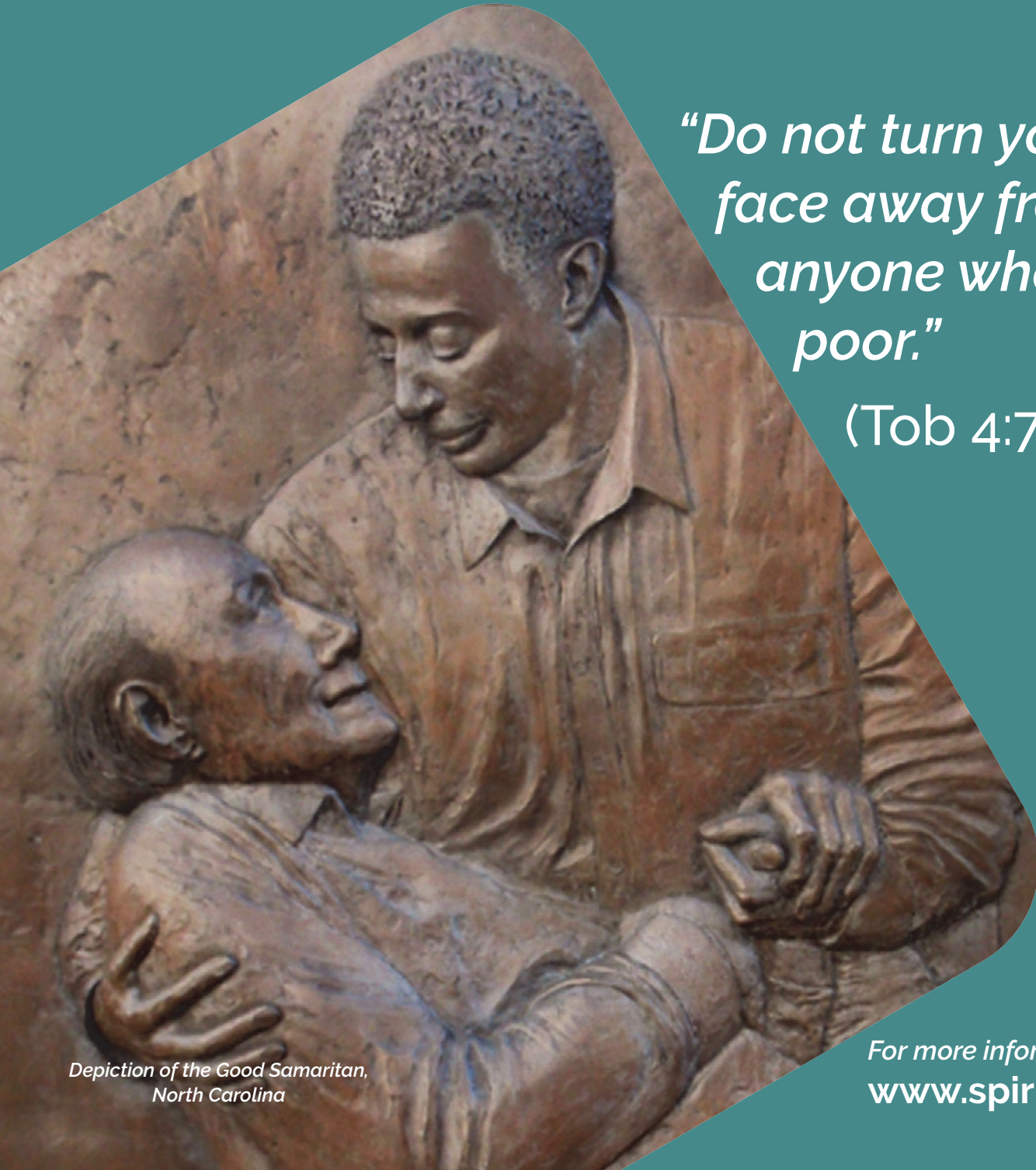


Sunday 19th November 2023

7th WORLD DAY of the POOR

*“Do not turn your
face away from
anyone who is
poor.”*

(Tob 4:7)



Depiction of the Good Samaritan,
North Carolina

For more information:
www.spiritan.ie

World Day of the Poor Logo

Reciprocity and interconnectedness are beautifully depicted in the emblem of the World Day of the Poor. Within this emblem, one can discern an open door with two individuals poised at its threshold. Both extend their hands, yet with distinct intentions: one reaches out in a plea for assistance, while the other extends their hand with the intent to provide aid. Remarkably, it becomes challenging to distinguish which of these two individuals truly embodies poverty. The reality is that both are in a state of need. The outstretched hand of the person seeking entry signifies a request for shared resources, while the outstretched hand of the one offering assistance beckons them to join in the act of sharing. These two hands converge, representing a meeting point where each party contributes something valuable. These outstretched arms convey solidarity and inspire us not to linger at the doorstep but to venture towards one another.



World Day of the Poor 2023

Pope Francis calls on all Christians to “acknowledge every poor person and every form of poverty, abandoning the indifference and the banal excuses” we make to protect our own well-being.

The theme for World Day of the Poor 2023 is from the Book of Tobit: “Do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor.” (Tob 4:7).

“When we encounter a poor person, we cannot look away, for that would prevent us from encountering the face of the Lord Jesus,” Pope Francis wrote.

In his message for the World Day of the Poor 2023 Pope Francis listed an array of cultural phenomena that prevent people from caring for the poor: greater pressure to live affluently, a tendency to disregard suffering, virtual reality overtaking real life and a sense of haste that prevents people from stopping to care for others. He offered the parable of the Good Samaritan, who stops to help a man in the street beaten by robbers, to counter the hangups many people have against helping the poor.

The parable “is not simply a story from the past; it continues to challenge each of us in the here and now of our daily lives,” he said. “It is easy to delegate charity to others, yet the calling of every Christian is to become personally involved.”

The Pope thanked God for the men and women “of every age and social status” who devote themselves to caring for the poor



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and excluded, the “ordinary people who quietly make themselves poor among the poor.”

Pope Francis also called for a “serious and effective commitment on the part of political leaders and legislators” to defend the rights enjoyed by all people to food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest, and social services as outlined in St. John XXIII’s 1963 encyclical “Pacem in Terris” (Peace on Earth).

While recognizing the need to pressure public institutions to defend the poor, the pope praised volunteers who serve the common good in a “spirit of solidarity and subsidiarity”.

He urged people not to merely consider statistics when speaking of the poor, but to remember that “the poor are persons; they have faces, stories, hearts and souls.” “Caring for the poor is more than simply a matter of a hasty handout,” Pope Francis said, “it calls for reestablishing the just interpersonal relationships that poverty harms.”

Calling for a care for the poor marked by “Gospel realism,” the pope invited Christians to discern the genuine needs of the poor. “What the poor need is certainly our humanity, our hearts open to love,” he said.



World Day of the Poor History

The World Day of the Poor was instituted by Pope Francis in his Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et Misera* in November 2016 to mark the conclusion of the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. The following passage from the Apostolic letter speaks to the vision of the World Day of the Poor:

During the "Jubilee for Socially Excluded People", as the Holy Doors of Mercy were being closed in all the cathedrals and shrines of the world, I had the idea that, as yet another tangible sign of this Extraordinary Holy Year, the entire Church might celebrate, on the Thirty-Third Sunday of Ordinary Time, the World Day of the Poor. This would be the worthiest way to prepare for the celebration of the Solemnity of our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, who identified with the little ones and the poor and who will judge us on our works of mercy (cf. Mt 25:31-46). It would be a day to help communities and each of the baptised to reflect on how poverty is at the very heart of the Gospel and that, as long as Lazarus lies at the door of our homes (cf. Lk 16:19-21), there can be no justice or social peace. This Day will also represent a genuine form of new evangelisation (cf. Mt 11:5) which can renew the face of the Church as She perseveres in her perennial activity of pastoral conversion and witness to mercy.

BIBLICAL REFLECTION

Good Samaritan Lk 10:25-37

But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead.

A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise, a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveller who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.' Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbour to the robbers' victim? "He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

- What is Jesus saying in this Gospel parable about compassion?
- What is the parable saying to our understanding of charity?
- What am I called to do from this Gospel parable?

REFLECTIONS

We don't have all the answers - We know our failings. Some of us have money to generously share, some of us don't, but all of us have something to give. The greatest poverty is to believe you cannot help another, and it is a real truth that those who believe they have least in fact often have the grace to give the most. We all have the opportunity to be the Good Samaritan. We come from many different places to this place where our journeys

meet. Who are we? The truth is that we are all the body of Christ.

(Carter, Richard; Williams, Rowan. *The City is my Monastery: A contemporary rule of life* (p. 108).

Human dignity—our own and that of every human being—deserves top priority as subject matter in basic education today. But the misery in our world makes it almost impossible for some people to feel loved and recognized. Extreme poverty is thus a crime against human dignity and poses a most urgent challenge to the whole human family. Misery can be overcome, and according to reliable experts, this goal is within realistic reach. Each one of us needs to find a place in this enterprise and go to work without delay. Our own human dignity demands it.

(Steindl-Rast, David. *You Are Here: Keywords for Life Explorers* (pp. 148-149).

That's grace. That's sacrificial love in action. Selflessly putting others first. That's humility. *How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!* Romans 10:15. This is how, as men and women of faith, we stand out. We put others first, and with Christ inside us, we go the extra mile for people. We try to be Christlike. Today, we ask Christ that our hearts and feet be instruments of love and courage in how we live.

(Grylls, Bear. *Soul Fuel: Daily Readings to Power Your Life* (p. 139).

PRAYER TO THE CREATOR

Lord, Father of our human family, you created all human beings equal in dignity: pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter, dialogue, justice and peace. Move us to create healthier societies and a more dignified world, a world without hunger, poverty, violence and war. May our hearts be open to all the peoples and nations of the earth. May we recognize the goodness and beauty that you have sown in each of us, and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects, and shared dreams. Amen.

(Pope Francis. *Fratelli Tutti* (pp. 214-215).

Prayers

Prayers of Intercession

- We pray for the Church throughout the world, that she may be a voice for those who lack even the necessities of life, tirelessly serving them and calling for change.

Response: *Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.*

- 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 impoverished.

Response: *Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.*

- For the people of God, that we will open our hearts to Christ's love for the poor 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.

Response: *Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.*

- For those who have lost their lives through circumstance of poverty that they might be welcomed into the heavenly kingdom; and for their families, that they might be comforted.

Response: *Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.*

See-Judge-Act: a Pastoral activity for school/parish groups or as an individual.

DECIDING OUR ACTION

- **Reflect** – our own experience within your peer group through a Gospel lens e.g. Good Samaritan
- **Voicing our opinions** – Sharing information with others and seeking to understanding
- **Solidarity** – Advocating an agreed action with others to offer a response to the context.

Things we (I) can do...	Thoughts to share
 <p>See for ourselves (myself)– Gain experience of poverty or an injustice that has moved you. e.g., the life of migrants.</p>	
 <p>Judge Ask why? – Analyse the causes of what continues this injustice. From your analysis pray with a Gospel story and seek a way forward as a community.</p>	
 <p>Go against the tide... Distance yourself from actions that create this particular injustice.</p>	
 <p>Ask 'but why' that way... Propose an alternative action or solutions that go to the root of the problem.</p>	