

VIII WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

17 NOVEMBER 2024



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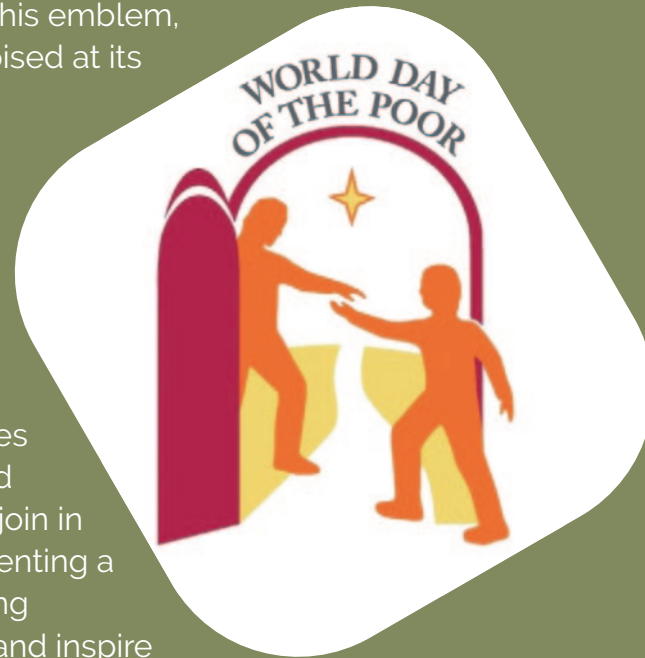


*...we need to make the prayer
of the poor our own and pray
together with them...*

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.



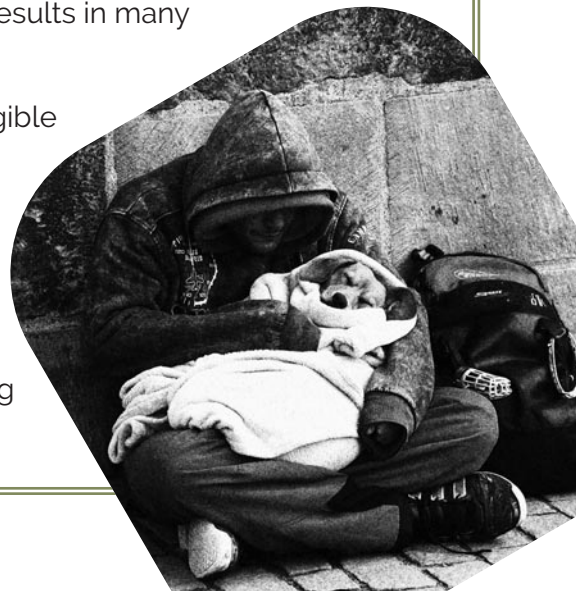
World Day of the Poor History

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.

Pope Francis message for World Day of the Poor 2024

*I*n his message, Pope Francis encourages everyone to learn to pray for the poor and to pray alongside them with humility and trust. The World Day of the Poor is a chance to recognize the presence of the poor in our cities and communities and to understand their needs. The Pope also highlights the “new poor,” those who suffer from violence and wars, as well as “bad politics carried out with weapons,” which results in many innocent victims.

Pope Francis emphasizes that true prayer must manifest in tangible acts of charity. He states, “If prayer is not translated into concrete action, it is in vain; (...) however, charity without prayer risks becoming philanthropy which soon runs out” (n. 7). This principle is reflected in the lives of many saints, such as Saint Teresa of Calcutta, who drew the faith and strength to serve the poor from her prayers. The message also cites Saint Benedict Joseph Labre, the “wanderer of God,” who lived among



“*The prayer of the poor rises up to God*”

(cf. Sir 21:5)

the poor and whose tomb in the Roman Church of Santa Maria ai Monti is visited by many pilgrims each year.

Moreover, the Pope acknowledges the numerous individuals in our cities who dedicate significant time to listening to and supporting the poor. These ordinary people, through their actions, “give voice to God’s response to the prayers of those who turn to Him” (n. 7). The World Day of the Poor is also a moment to remember and thank the Lord for their dedication.

Pope Francis’ message for the VIII World Day of the Poor, therefore, calls for greater spiritual attention to the poor, who need both God and a tangible human presence – someone who listens and stays close to them.



The Message of Pope Francis

SPIRASI

(Spiritan Asylum Services Initiative)

2024 marks the 25th Anniversary of the founding by the Spiritans of SPIRASI (Spiritan Asylum Services Initiative).

In those 25 years over 6,800 people – from over 100 countries and mostly survivors / victims of torture, and their families – have benefited from SPIRASI's rehabilitation services and related supports.

Services include medical assessments, medico-legal reports and a wide range of therapies. In recent years a befriending programme has linked vulnerable clients to volunteers who can reduce isolation and loneliness, and help with integration into Irish society.

SPIRASI also offers health information in Reception Centres for asylum-seekers in Dublin, does outreach in other centres and offers migrants, including migrant workers, an integration programme which includes integrated modules on English language, information technology, cultural orientation and life-skills training.

Most victims / survivors of torture resident in Ireland today are seeking asylum (people outside their country of origin seeking the protection of the Irish State), have been recognised as refugees (people who have been granted asylum), or have been granted either 'leave (permission) to remain' or 'subsidiary protection' in the country.

See www.spirasi.ie

Inspirational Reflections for World Day of Prayer

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The prayer of the poor rises up to God. **Sir 21:5**

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God's love and ours. **1 John 4:7-12**

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All people are made one in Jesus Christ. What significance might this make as we encounter s peoples of cultures and religious traditions which are different to our own? **Galatians 3:28**

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The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me ... Jesus proclaims his mission. **Luke 4:18-19**

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Poverty is the worst form of violence. **Mahatma Gandhi**

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The greatest disease in the West today is not tuberculosis or leprosy; it is being unwanted, unloved, and uncared for. **Mother Teresa**

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Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life. While poverty persists, there is no true freedom. **Nelson Mandela**



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