



Introduction

The World Day of the Poor was first observed on 19 November 2017, with the theme, “Let us love, not with words but with deeds”. For this year the theme is “Do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor” (Tobit 4:7). Don’t look away when we meet a poor in our daily life on the street, because faith teaches us that every poor person is a son or daughter of God and that Christ is present in them. “Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40).

In his message for World Day of the Poor of this year, Pope Francis reflects on the example of Tobit. He considers how the Book of Tobit teaches us to be realistic and practical in whatever we do with and for the poor. Pope Francis urges us to be good Samaritans, to be a light that bring joy not only to those dearest to us, but everyone without exception of none, specially to those who are poor, unprivileged, migrants and refugees, victims of the war, etc.



World
Day
of the
Poor
2023,
November 19

It is easy to delegate charity to others, but pope Francis reminds us that all the baptized are called to be personally involved practicing charity to the unfortunate people. The SVDs, faithful and creative disciples of Jesus, are committed to be a light that must shine and give live and hope to those who live without the right to life, to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life, including food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest, and, finally, the necessary social services.

We would like to invite all the lay partners who collaborate with us in the parishes, schools and universities, special ministries, to join us in this commitment of love towards those who need us more, so our light will be stronger, it will be not just a candle in the darkness, but rather a powerful and brightest chandelier that will make the darkness of sin and unbelief disappear and the heart of Jesus will live in the hearts of everyone.



Biblical Reflection

I, Tobit, walked in the ways of truth and righteousness all the days of my life. I performed many acts of charity for my kindred and my people who had gone with me in exile (Tob 1:3 NRSV)



The Book of Tobit is a striking narrative about migrants and charity. Tobit, the head of an exiled Israelite family, unwaveringly follows God's ways and laws in a foreign land. His charitable deeds towards fellow exiles, including the burying of bodies of those executed by the oppressors, expose him to great peril. In the course of these acts of kindness, he tragically loses his sight, and his family plunges into poverty. His son, Tobias, is sent on a journey to another foreign land to recover some family wealth and encounters demonic forces afflicting another devout Israelite family. Ultimately, divine intervention by the archangel Raphael triumphs over these malevolent forces; Tobit regains his sight while peace and prosperity return to the families.



The story of Tobit is no mere entertaining tale with a happy ending. Instead, it imparts a profound theological and moral lesson encapsulated in Tobit's counsel to his son: "Do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor, and the face of God will not be turned away from you" (Tob 4:7 NRSV). Tobit lived by this principle, and it bore fruit for him, his family, and his people. Compassion and assistance extended to the less fortunate invite divine intervention into the human world on an individual and communal scale.

Our troubled contemporary world grapples with afflictions reminiscent of Tobit's challenges, particularly affecting the impoverished and migrants. Acts of charity can yield healing and restoration, even in the direst circumstances. The biblical message of Tobit's story echoes in our time, asserting that we possess the means to alleviate suffering through acts of charity.

Missionary Actions to Eradicate Poverty



1. Empower people: Empower people living in poverty by involving them in the development and implementation of plans and programs to reduce and eradicate poverty. Their involvement ensures that programs reflect those things that are important to them.

2. Gender equality: Gender equality and gender justice raise household incomes and translates into better prospects and greater well-being of children, which is a smart way to reduce the poverty for future generations as well as our own.

3. People participation: People identify the issues and participate in citizenship, expressing their views and making decisions that will shape their future.



4. Quality education: Access to quality education provides people with the knowledge and life skills they need to realize their full potential. Help in training teachers, building new schools and particularly helping girls' education.

5. Access to healthcare: Build health clinics, train health care workers and invest in equipment and medicine.

6. Water & sanitation: Build community water points, school latrines and help to establish organizations to ensure the continued management and maintenance of water points.

7. Economic security: Training people living in poverty to acquire the skills and knowledge they need insures to secure a livelihood, and support their families. Create and improve access to jobs and income and develop entrepreneurial talent.

8. Technology and electricity: Provide access to technology and innovation including internet access and affordable energy.

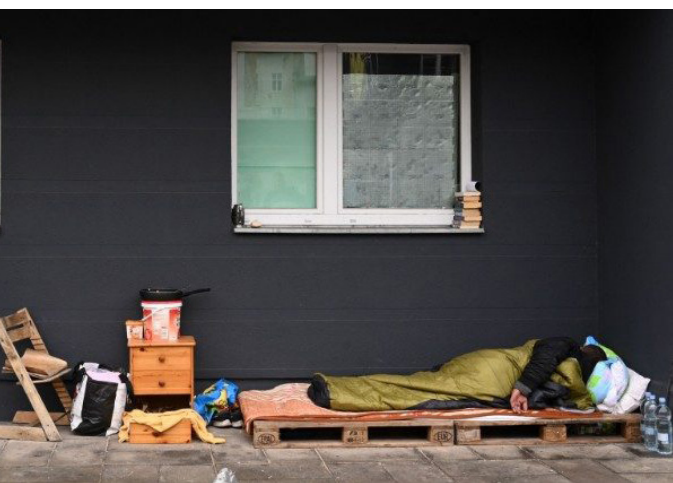


Prayer for the World Day of the poor 2023

Lord Jesus Christ,

You lived out a model of prophetic dialogue with the poor. Pour down on our communities your Spirit of solidarity and liberation, so that we might see and transform all that keeps us distant from the poor, caused by the way we think and act, in the ways that we connect with them, and through our style of life.

Grant us a heart that is free and generous, so that we might be, in both society and the Church, prophetic communities open to the embracing love of God for all.



Make us worthy to serve our people throughout the world who live and die in poverty and hunger. Give them through our hands this day their daily bread, and by our understanding, love. Give them peace and joy.

Through the intercession of Sts. Arnold and Joseph may we continue building bridges of solidarity with the poor which make possible a different world where we can share together with the whole human race the Bread and the Word at the common table of life. Amen.

(Compiled from SVD Vademecum 2009)