

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 17th October

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.



(Luke 4: 18-19)

In 1992, the General Assembly of the United Nations declared 17th October the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. The JPIC Commission of the USG/UISG¹ aims to promote awareness of the need to eradicate poverty and destitution in all countries, particularly in developing countries. This prayer service was prepared for the Commission by the NGO 'Social Justice Ireland'.

Opening Prayer

We gather in your presence Lord. We ask that this prayer will draw us deeper into right relationships with You, with ourselves, with each other, with institutions and with the earth. We place our hopes, our dreams, our works and our efforts for justice in particular the eradication of poverty before You. We pray that we may listen deeply and reflectively so that we will be more consciously aware of the needs of the most vulnerable in our society. Having identified those needs may we have courage to work courageously for the Reign of God and the transformation of our World, Amen.

Opening song

Voices that Challenge

(music and text by David Haas)



Call us to hear the voices that challenge
Deep in the hearts of all people!
By serving your world as lovers and dreamers,
We become voices that challenge!
For we are the voice of God!

Voices that challenge:

The children who long to be heard and respected!
The lowly and broken destroyed by oppression!
The old and the fearful who hope for a new day!

Voices that challenge:

The lives and the cries of the poor and the silenced!
The young ones who dream of a world free of hatred!
The sick and the dying who cry for compassion!

Voices that challenge:

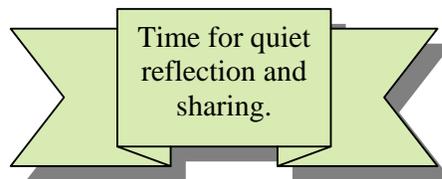
The ones who seek peace by their witness and courage!
The women who suffer the pain of injustice!
The people with AIDS and those plagued with addiction!
The prophets and heroes who call us to question!
The healers who teach us forgiveness and mercy!
The victims of violent abuse and aggression!
The Christ who gave his life that we might live!

¹ JPIC Commission Rome: email – jpicusguisg@lasalle.org and www.jpicformation.wikispaces.org

Reflection Quote

“If a brother or sister be naked,” says Saint James; “if they lack their daily nourishment, and one of you says to them: ‘Go in peace, be warmed and be filled’, without giving them what is necessary for the body, what good does it do?” (James 2:15-16). Today no one can be ignorant any longer of the fact that in whole continents countless men and women are ravished by hunger, countless numbers of children are undernourished, so that many of them die in infancy, while the physical growth and mental developments of many others are retarded and as a result whole regions are condemned to the most depressing despondency....Let each one examine his/her conscience, a conscience that conveys a new message for our times. Is she/he prepared to support out of his/her own pocket works and undertakings organised in favour of the most destitute? Is she/he ready to pay higher taxes so that the public authorities can intensify their efforts in favour of development?

Populorum Progressio 45-47



The Guest of Yahweh (Psalm 14/15)

Yahweh, who can find a home in your tent,
Who can dwell on your holy mountain?

Whoever lives blamelessly,
who acts uprightly,
who speaks the truth from the heart,
who does not slander with his tongue.

Who does no wrong to his fellow citizen
who casts no discredit on a neighbour
who holds the godless in disdain,
but honours those who love Yahweh

Who stands by a pledge come what may,
who takes no interest on a loan
who takes no bribe to harm the innocent
no one who so acts can ever be shaken.

Intercessions: Litany from the Frontiers of Charity

Response/ May love find a way through us.

1. In a world fragmented and divided, may love find a way to bring harmony and unity. **R/**
2. In a world of economic extremes, may love find a way to level injustices. **R/**
3. In a world where some consume more than all need, may love find a way to awaken consciousness. **R/**
4. In a world of spiritual poverty and material surfeit, may love find a way to open hearts to the “enough” of God. **R/**
5. In a world of small thinking and selfishness may love find a way to live with global intent. **R/**
6. In a world of suffering humanity and dwindling natural systems may love find a way to bring the fullness of life to all. **R/**
7. In a world of growing wakefulness across boundaries, may love find a way to connect energies and efforts. **R/**
8. In a world of increasingly complete geo-political and socio- economic webs, may love find a way to create simple and just solutions. **R/**
9. In a world where global dilemmas seem overwhelming, may love find a way to take one step at a time. **R/**

Pause for Thought...

(Economic Justice for All #94).

The needs of the poor take priority over the desires of the rich; the rights of workers over the maximization of profits; the preservation of the environment over uncontrolled industrial expansion; the production to meet social needs over production for military purposes.

Let us pray: Loving Creator, you made all people in your image and likeness. Help us to realise that all men and women are people of great worth and dignity. Give us the strength and courage to work for justice and peace, so that all people may be able to live according to the dignity you gave them. We ask you this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever Amen.

Song/Hymn

Beatitudes for Social Engagement.

(Louise Helene Renou).

Blessed are you,

when you remain available, sharing in simplicity what you possess.

Blessed are you,

when you weep over the absence of happiness around you, and throughout the World.

Blessed are you,

when you opt for gentleness and dialogue even when this seems long and difficult.

Blessed are you,

when you creatively devise new ways of donating your time, your tenderness and gems of hope.

Blessed are you,

when you listen with your heart to detect what is gift in others.

Blessed are you,

when you strive to take the first step, the necessary one to attain peace with brothers and sisters throughout the world.

Blessed are you,

when you keep in your heart wonderment, openness and free questioning of life.

Blessed are you,

when you take seriously your faith in the Risen Christ.

Song/Hymn

Gospel Reading: Matthew 25:31-45

"But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation 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; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to 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? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'

The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

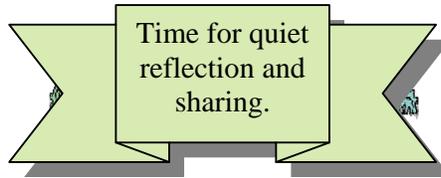
Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.'

Then they themselves also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?'

Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'



Intercessions



Response: May God be gracious and bless us.

We pray that all Nations work together to build a world of justice, love and peace. **R/**
We pray that all people have what they need to live a dignified and fully human life. **R/**
We pray that all people may have sufficient income to live life with dignity. **R/**
We pray that all people have meaningful work **R/**
We pray that all people have access to adequate and appropriate accommodation. **R/**
We pray that all people have access to adequate and appropriate healthcare. **R/**
We pray that all people have access to relevant education throughout their lives. **R/**
We pray that all people can have the opportunity for self development and so can participate more fully in their community and the wider society. **R/**
We pray that all people can contribute to developing meaningful shared values in society. **R/**
We pray that all people have a genuine voice in shaping the decisions that affect them and that all people can contribute to the development of society. **R/**
We pray that all development is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable for this generation and the generations to come. **R/**

Pause for Thought

(Sollicitudo Rei Sociallis #39).

“Interdependence must be transformed into solidarity, based upon the principle that the goods of creation are meant for all....Solidarity helps us to see the ‘other’ whether a person, people or nation, not just as some kind of instrument, with a work capacity and physical strength to be exploited at low cost and then discarded when no longer useful, but as our neighbour...”

Let us pray: God our Father, we ask you to help us to imitate your Son who was concerned for the poor and needy. Help us to be on the side of the poor and to be with them as they struggle for their rights. We ask you this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever Amen.

To Have Hope



To have hope
is to believe that history continues open
to the dream of God and to human creativity.

To have hope
is to continue affirming
that it is possible to dream a different world,
without hunger, without injustice,
without discrimination.

To have hope
is to be a courier of God
and courier of men and women of good will,
tearing down walls, destroying borders,
building bridges.

To have hope
is to believe in the revolutionary potential of faith,
is to leave the door open so that
the Spirit can enter and make all things anew.



To have hope
is to begin again as many times as necessary.

To have hope
is to believe that hope is not
the last thing that dies.

To have hope
is to believe that hope cannot die
that hope no longer dies.

To have hope
is to live.



(Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo
(Scalabrinians) Honduras.)

Closing prayer: Our Father

Our Father, who are in heaven,
Hallowed be Your Name.
Your Kingdom come.
Your Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Let us pray. God our Father, we ask you to help us to worship you in an acceptable way. Help us to be always aware that true worship demands of us to live just lives and to work for justice and peace in the world. We ask you this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever Amen.

Closing song: Canticale of Mary

My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her lowliness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.

The Almighty works marvels for me.
Holy is his name!
His mercy is from age to age,
on those who fear him.

He puts forth his arm in strength
and scatters the proud-hearted.
he casts the mighty from their thrones
and raises the lowly.

He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich away empty.

He protects Israel, his servant,
remembering his mercy,
the mercy promised to our Ancestors,
to Abraham and his heirs for ever.

Suggested questions for reflection and discussion:

1. **What is poverty?** In Ireland the Irish Government define poverty as “People are living in poverty if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living that is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally. As a result of inadequate income and resources people may be excluded and marginalized from participating in activities that are considered the norm for other people in society. (NAPS 1997). **How do you define poverty? Does your Government have a definition of poverty?**
2. If the obligation to provide justice for all means that the poor have the single most urgent economic claim on the conscience of the nation and indeed wider world. **What are the implications for the choices we make in a time of economic prosperity or recession?**
3. As followers of Christ, we are challenged to make a fundamental "option for the poor". **How do we assess life styles, policies and institutions in terms of their impact on people who are poor?**
4. **What can you do to work for a more just society, in particular, the eradication of poverty?**