



Pastoral Resource



Presentation

The hope of the poor shall not perish for ever (Ps 9:18).

“The hope of the poor shall not perish for ever”. This message from the words of Psalm 9 is the central theme of this *Third World Day of the Poor*. It is a gaze full of hope, addressed to those who know how to grasp the certainty that the Lord will intervene in the most diverse situations of life.

In his Message for this *Day*, Pope Francis offers through the words of the Psalmist, that speak remarkably well of the reality with our times, despite the distance in time, a touching definition of the poor: those who “put their trust in the Lord” (n. 3). They are those who “trust in the Lord” because they know him, which is to say, they have a “personal relationship of affection and love” with God. The poor cannot remain forsaken in their hope and God intervenes in their favour to give them back the dignity lost and free them from the slavery of the insecurity of marginalization.

Hence, the reflection on the concrete commitment that we are all called to undertake “in the events of everyday life”. A commitment that “goes beyond initiatives of assistance. Praiseworthy and necessary as the latter may be, they should have the goal of encouraging in everyone a greater concern for individuals in any kind of distress” (n. 7). Pope Francis returns to a theme that is particularly dear to him: “Before all else, the poor need God and his love, made visible by “the saints next door”, people who by the simplicity of their lives express clearly the power of Christian love. God uses any number of ways and countless means to reach people’s hearts. Certainly, the poor come to us also because we give them food, but what they really need is more than our offer of a warm meal or a sandwich. The poor need our hands, to be lifted up; our hearts, to feel anew the warmth of affection; our presence, to overcome loneliness. In a word, they need love” (n. 8). It is a challenge, therefore, to know how to look at the essence and to live the words of Jesus “*as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me*”(Mt 25:40).

This *pastoral resource* is offered as a simple aid to dioceses, parishes and to all the various ecclesial organizations to prepare for and to celebrate the *Third World Day of the Poor*. It should help us reflect on how to restore hope in those whom the world would like to relegate to a life of loneliness and discrimination. Once again, the *World Day of the Poor* gives us an opportunity to ensure that no one will be left without our help and closeness. The Church cannot close its eyes on the needy, let alone those who are voiceless. We are therefore urged to abandon our selfishness, which closes us in on ourselves and on our own needs, to change our mentality with the hope of becoming God's instruments for the liberation and advancement of the poor.

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