

Novena for World Day of the Poor

DAY 1

Friday 7 November

*For those who
experience mental
anguish*

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Antiphon

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.

Psalm 23

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Scripture reading

"Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done." Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground."

Luke 22: 41-43

Silent reflection on the word of God: ask the Holy Spirit to let the words touch your heart and speak to you in the here and now of your life in your community.

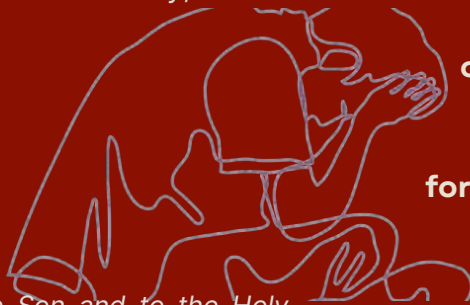
Jesus knew mental anguish in his earthly life. After the last supper with his disciples, he prayed alone in the garden of Gethsemane in a state of heightened mental distress. He knew he was about to be arrested and subjected to humiliating trial and excruciatingly painful execution in public. Jesus knew the depths of the human condition, the places of mental and spiritual darkness. He is with us in our deepest anxiety.

We pray for those whose lives are not flourishing because of mental ill-health and anxiety of all kinds. We pray for an understanding of their needs, for an understanding of our own fragility, for the grace not to judge, but to offer support and friendship whenever we can.

**Loving Father
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inspire us with your Spirit
of compassion, justice and truth
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for the relief, defence and liberation
of all who are trapped
in oppressive circumstances.
We make this our prayer
through Christ our Lord.
Amen**

"Christ was sent by the Father 'to preach good news to the poor...to restore the broken-hearted' (Luke 4:18), 'to seek and to save the lost' (Luke 19:10): in the same way the church surrounds with love all who are afflicted with human infirmity, indeed in the poor and suffering it recognises the face of its poor and suffering founder, it endeavours to relieve their need and in them it strives to serve Christ."

Vatican II, Lumen Gentium, 8



DAY 2

Saturday 8 November

*For those who
experience abuse and
violence*

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and
of the Holy Spirit. Amen*

Antiphon

I sought the Lord and he answered me,
and delivered me from all my fears.
Look to him, and be radiant;
so your face shall never be ashamed.
This poor soul cried, and was heard by the
Lord,
and was saved from every trouble.

Psalm 34

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to
the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is
now and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.*

Scripture reading

“Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers? He said, ‘the one who showed him mercy.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise’.”

Luke 10: 36-37

*Silent reflection on the word of God: ask the
holy Spirit to let the words touch your heart
and speak to you in the here and now of your
life, in your community.*



In Luke's gospel Jesus was asked “Who is my neighbour?” (10: 29), but this was to test him. It is a tricky question. If Jesus defines who is a neighbour, who is worthy of our care, then at the same time he has defined who is not a neighbour, and not worthy of our care. His answer is to tell the story of the Good Samaritan, the one who showed compassion for the helpless victim left for dead by the side of the road. When the religious figures of the priest and Levite were too fearful to help and walked on the other side of the road, the Samaritan intervened, at risk to himself, and committed himself to the recovery of the wounded stranger.

We pray for those who are victims of abuse or violence, whose lives are diminished by the pain inflicted by others. May we commit ourselves to building communities of peace and reconciliation, attentive to the causes of violence and to the needs of those who are its victims.

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“In the face of so much pain and suffering, our only course is to imitate the Good Samaritan. Any other decision would make us either one of the robbers or one of those who walked by without showing compassion for the sufferings of the man on the roadside.”

Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 67

DAY 3
Sunday 9 November

For those who are discerning the best use of their personal resources

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Antiphon

Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?
Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked to cover them?

Isaiah 58: 6-7

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Scripture reading

“He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the treasury, and many of the rich put in a great deal. A poor widow came and put in two small coins, the equivalent of a penny. Then he called the disciples and said to them, “I tell you solemnly, this poor widow has put more in than all who have contributed to the treasury; for they have all put in money they had over, but she from the little she had has put in everything she possessed, all she had to live on.”

Mark 12: 41-44

Silent reflection on the word of God: ask the Holy Spirit to let the words touch your heart and speak to you in the here and now of your life in your community.

Jesus was a people watcher. Imagine seeing the people coming and going in the Temple courtyard through the eyes of God made flesh. What catches his eye, what does he notice, what conclusions does he reach? He’s clearly not impressed by displays of wealth, for one thing. The rich people who give a lot don’t fool him. He knows that this is for public acclaim and it’s certainly not hurting their wallets. It’s the poor widow he holds up for us admiration, who gives “two small copper coins” for the upkeep of the Temple. Relatively speaking, this is so much more of a gift than the loose change given by the rich. Out of her love for God and her religion, she has emptied her pockets. She has given to the point of sacrifice.

We pray for the grace to give more freely out of our resources. Many of us will have responsibilities, household bills to try and pay, perhaps children to look after. Jesus does not want us to neglect our children and our responsibilities to provide for them, but he’s constantly challenging us out of our comfort zone. What more can we give? What comforts can we give up for the sake of contributing to the Church and helping others?

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“For the Lord desires that the faithful laity also should extend his kingdom, the kingdom of ‘truth and life, the kingdom of holiness and grace, the kingdom of justice”

Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, 36

DAY 4

Monday 10 November

St Martin of Tours

*For those who
experience destitution*

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and
of the Holy Spirit. Amen*

Antiphon

Give justice to the weak and the orphan,
maintain the right of the lowly and the
destitute.

Rescue the weak and the needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

Psalm 82

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to
the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is
now and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.*

Scripture reading

“There was a rich man who was dressed in
purple and fine linen and who feasted
sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay
a poor man named Lazarus, covered with
sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger
with what fell from the rich man’s table;
even the dogs would come and lick his
sores. The poor man died and was carried
away by the angels to be with Abraham.”

Luke 16: 19-22

*Silent reflection on the word of God: ask the
holy Spirit to let the words touch your heart
and speak to you in the here and now of your
life, in your community.*

St Martin of Tours served in the Roman
cavalry as a young man, possibly in the
Emperor’s personal bodyguard. A
prestigious career lay ahead of him, but he
had already heard the call of Christ and
was undergoing instruction in the faith.
The story is told that one day in winter
while on duty he encountered a beggar by
the roadside, dressed only in rags. Martin
took his sword and divided his military
cloak in two, giving half to the beggar.
That night he had a dream in which Christ
appeared to him and said, “Today a mere
catechumen has clothed me.”

We pray for those who are destitute, who
do not even have enough for life’s
necessities: food, clothes, shelter, warmth,
safety. May we commit ourselves to a just
and generous sharing of resources so that
all may enjoy the fruits of creation.

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“We cannot love God unless we love each
other, and to love we must know each
other. We know Him in the breaking of
bread, and we know each other in the
breaking of bread, and we are not alone
any more. Heaven is a banquet and life is a
banquet, too, even with a crust, where
there is companionship.”

Dorothy Day, The Long Loneliness, p. 28



DAY 5

Tuesday 11 November

*For those who
experience
imprisonment*

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and
of the Holy Spirit. Amen*

Antiphon

The Lord is faithful in all his words,
and gracious in all his deeds.
The Lord upholds all who are falling,
and raises up all who are bowed down.
The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food in due season.
You open your hand,
satisfying the desire of every living thing.
The Lord is just in all his ways,
and kind in all his doings.
The Lord is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.

Psalm 145

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to
the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is
now and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.*

Scripture reading

“When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor.”

Matthew 27: 1-2

Silent reflection on the word of God: ask the Holy Spirit to let the words touch your heart and speak to you in the here and now of your life in your community.

Jesus, the Word made flesh, through whom all things were created, was betrayed and arrested. He was bound and taken to the house of the high priest and interrogated. False witnesses testified against him. He was accused of blasphemy, beaten and spat upon. He spent the night in a dungeon in the house of the high priest, which prisoners were lowered into on a rope. There was no light, his one companion was darkness.

We pray for those who are in prison in our society, whether justly or unjustly, who miss their families, whose families miss them. We pray for those who sit in judgement, who govern the prisons, that they will act with justice, mindful of the dignity of all, both the victims of crime and those who are accused. We pray that in our communities we will never judge those who are released from prison, but offer welcome and a helping hand as they try to rebuild their lives.

For more information on how Catholic parishes can sign up to be places of welcome for those coming out of prison, see:
<https://www.welcomedirectory.org.uk/>

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“And there are also people who suffer, who are discarded by society, at least for a period, and Jesus goes there to tell them: ‘You are important to me’. Jesus comes to serve us, and the sign that Jesus serves us here today, in the ‘Regina Coeli’ prison, is that he wanted to choose 12 of you, like the 12 Apostles, to wash your feet. Jesus takes a chance with each of us. Understand this: Jesus is called Jesus; he is not called Pontius Pilate. Jesus does not know how to wash his hands of people: he only knows how to take a risk! Look at this beautiful image: Jesus bent down among the thorns, risking to hurt himself by picking up the lost sheep.”

Pope Francis, Holy Thursday Homily in “Regina Coeli” prison in Rome, 2018

DAY 6

Wednesday 12 November

For those who experience disability

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Antiphon

In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low, the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together.

Isaiah 40: 3-5

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Scripture reading

“Then some people came, bringing to him a paralysed man, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven’.”

Mark 2: 3-5

Silent reflection on the word of God: ask the holy Spirit to let the words touch your heart and speak to you in the here and now of your life, in your community.

Many of our places of worship and events are still not fully accessible by people with a disability. A person with a disability once said, “I am disabled by society’s lack of willingness to accommodate me.” In the saying which is often used when discussing the needs of persons with disability, “Nothing about me, without me.” Persons with disabilities need to be seen and heard by those without disabilities and their voices should be at the heart of any discussion about greater accessibility. In the gospel, the paralysed man was able to reach Jesus with the help of his friends, but we shouldn’t have to take the roof off the church to make that possible.

We pray for those with disabilities of different kinds, whose everyday life is sometimes harder than it should be due to the inattentiveness of most of us to accommodate society to their needs. May we honour the dignity of every person, made in the image and likeness of God.

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“Love is expressed first in being with before doing to someone. We have to continually renew our awareness of this because we can get caught up in a lot of the doing for. You see, if our actions do not first come from the desire to be with a person, then it really becomes just social work. When you are willing to be with a poor person you can recognise his need, and if your love is genuine, you naturally want to do what you can as an expression of your love. Service, in a way, is simply a means of expressing your being for that person – and often with the poorest people you cannot completely alleviate their problem, but by being with them, by being for them, whatever you do for them makes a difference.”

Saint Teresa of Calcutta, *A Simple Path*, p. 91

DAY 7

Thursday 13 November

For those who have to leave their countries due to war, poverty or fear of persecution

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Antiphon

You are indeed my rock and my fortress;
for your name's sake lead me and guide me,
take me out of the net that is hidden for me,
for you are my refuge.

Psalm 31

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Scripture reading

“When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God.”

Leviticus 19: 33-34

Silent reflection on the word of God: ask the Holy Spirit to let the words touch your heart and speak to you in the here and now of your life in your community.

Imagine having to leave your home with only what you can carry, because of fear of war, violence, intimidation, poverty, climate change. What would you take with you? Imagine having to walk for hundreds of miles in open country, worried about who is getting tired, who might not make it. Imagine encountering the high walls and stony faces of countries who do not want you. This is the experience of the refugee, the one who is forced to leave their home looking for a life elsewhere, looking for welcome in a strange land, looking for peace and dignity.

We pray for the grace to welcome the stranger, to see in them the suffering face of Christ. We pray for an understanding of how we live, of how the choices we make might contribute to the poverty of others, of how our lifestyle might contribute to the damage of the earth, our common home.

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Amen**

“Our response to the arrival of migrating persons can be summarised by four words: welcome, protect, promote and integrate.”

Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 129

DAY 8

Friday 14 November

For those who experience homelessness

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Antiphon

His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation,
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the
thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from
their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.

Luke 1: 50-53

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Scripture reading

“As they were going along the road, someone said to him, ‘I will follow you wherever you go.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head’.”

Luke 9: 57-58

Silent reflection on the word of God: ask the holy Spirit to let the words touch your heart and speak to you in the here and now of your life, in your community.

Jesus, the Word made flesh, became poor for our sake, he emptied himself so that we might have life to the full. He knew days and nights in the wilderness, sleeping under the stars. He knew rejection from his own community. Yet he reached out to the ones beyond the care of a family, living on the edge of life.

We pray for those in our community who have no home, who sleep rough on our streets, or who are forced to go from place to place to look for shelter. May we be moved to do what we can to offer help, and work for a world where everyone has a place to call their own.

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“The poor are not people ‘outside’ our communities, but brothers and sisters whose sufferings we should share, in an effort to alleviate their difficulties and marginalization, restore their lost dignity and ensure their necessary social inclusion.”

Pope Francis, *Message for World Day of the Poor*, 2021

DAY 9

Saturday 15 November

For those who experience isolation and vulnerability in old age

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Antiphon

Father of orphans and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.

God gives the desolate a home to live in; he leads out the prisoners to prosperity.

Psalm 68

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Scripture reading

“As he taught, he said, ‘Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honour at banquets! They devour widows’ houses and for the sake of appearances say long prayers. They will receive greater condemnation.”

Mark 12: 38-40

Silent reflection on the word of God: ask the Holy Spirit to let the words touch your heart and speak to you in the here and now of your life in your community.

The scribes were among the religious professionals at the time of Jesus. They were highly educated and often well regarded for their observance of the law. What Jesus is highlighting and condemning, however, is their unscrupulous predatory behaviour which would drive people into poverty, especially the most vulnerable in the society such as widows, by benefitting from payments for offerings and services. They are more concerned about how they are seen and regarded by others than their relationship with God. Their ego is in charge, they are the centre of their world.

We pray for those in our community who are exploited in vulnerable old age, by those in authority, by landlords, by corporate interests. May we be attentive to the needs of the elderly in our community and seek to understand the ways in which they are sometimes reduced to poverty and insecurity.

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“The future of the world depends on this covenant between young and old. Who, if not the young, can take the dreams of the elderly and make them come true? Yet for this to happen, it is necessary that we continue to dream. Our dreams of justice, of peace, of solidarity can make it possible for our young people to have new visions; in this way, together, we can build the future.”

Pope Francis, *Message for Inaugural World Day of Prayer for Grandparents and Elderly*, 2021

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“Saint John Chrysostom’s admonition remains ever timely: ‘If you want to honour the body of Christ, do not scorn it when it is naked; do not honour the Eucharistic Christ with silk vestments, and then, leaving the church, neglect the other Christ suffering from cold and nakedness’.”

Pope Francis, *Message for First World Day of the Poor*, 2017