

# FOURTH WORLD DAY OF THE POOR



**SUNDAY XXXIII IN  
ORDINARY TIME  
NOVEMBER 15, 2020**



**“STRETCH FORTH YOUR HAND TO THE  
POOR” (SIR 7:32)**

# FOURTH WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

"Brother, when you see a poor man, you see a mirror of the Lord and his poor mother." This phrase attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi, gathers a particular approach that guides the celebration of this new World Day of the Poor. This is not an abstract concept. It is about specific faces. It is about God in person.

At the time of the Pontificate of Francis, the Franciscan charism occupies a prominent place on the agenda of ecclesial renewal. The name chosen by the current Bishop of Rome updates the events of God in Umbria in the thirteenth century and proposes an anthropological reference to repair the creation that threatens ruins. Fratello Tutti walks signing *Laudato Si'* *Evangeli Gaudium* in our beloved common home.

This new humanity is based on humility and brotherhood. The World Day for the Poor should not be understood as an event, but as a process. To prepare for it, we invite you to consider the following dimensions:



AN APPROACH BASED ON INTEGRAL ECOLOGY



A CONTEMPLATION OF REALITY



A DISCERNMENT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF OUR BROTHERHOOD



A COMMITMENT ROOTED IN THE STORY OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

**"STRETCH FORTH YOUR HAND TO THE POOR"**  
**(SIR 7:32)**

# 1. STRETCH FORTH YOUR HAND TO THE POOR: FROM THE INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

The best example of an integral ecology lived with joy and authenticity is Saint Francis of Assisi. He called all creatures sisters because he discovered that we were all sons and daughters of the merciful God. For this reason, in his spirituality, love for the Creator, service to the poor, concern for nature and the search for inner peace were inseparable. (Cf. LS 10)

Let us not forget that Saint John Paul II declared him in 1979 as Patron of the people who cultivate ecology. The verb "cultivate" has an important meaning as it is associated with "culture." In the Social Doctrine of the Church, culture expresses the relationship with God, with oneself, with others and the rest of the created work. Hence, it is key to understand that conversion to the Lord implies the transition from a culture of disposal to a culture of care.

The "waste" is evident in the amount of garbage that we generate daily in the world. Verifying that we live in an "immense deposit of filth" is a clear example of the seriousness of the problem, which is also reflected in the number of people who are discarded in our society.

The use of expressions such as "disposable," "social cleansing", "human scum", is something totally contrary to the Gospel. It reflects an deceptive way of understanding the relationship with our neighbor, even if he were the greatest sinner. That was not the way Jesus looked. It was not how St. Francis or St. Clare gazed at the world.

**"STRETCH FORTH YOUR HAND TO THE POOR"**  
**(SIR 7:32)**

# 1. STRETCH FORTH YOUR HAND TO THE POOR: FROM THE INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

Integral ecology is a powerful concept that links the various relationships of the human being and proposes the path of care as a path to reconciliation. The parable of the Good Samaritan helps us to understand that. The description of the actions carried out by the good man who sympathized with someone dying on the side of the road leads us to reflect on that story in the new context. It is one in which our violated Sister, Mother Earth (LS 1) and to the fellow human beings, injured and discarded by the economy of exclusion and discriminatory policies are abandoned at the side of the road.

The number of human beings that live within the socially degraded urban environments and ecosystems reflect a shocking image. Pope Francis' urgent call for us to act as Good Samaritans is a call to integral ecology. The cry of the poor has joined to the cry of the Earth. It is impossible to preserve the watersheds of the great rivers, without addressing the problems of the impoverished families that inhabit them and without considering the social, economic, and political conflicts raging around. It is not enough to create recycling programs without considering the lived reality of the impoverished men, women and children who work as recyclers. It is not enough to worry about the endangered fish. We must also seek to improve the lives of the poor fishermen and their families struggling to survive.

**“STRETCH FORTH YOUR HAND TO THE POOR”  
(SIR 7:32)**

# 1. STRETCH FORTH YOUR HAND TO THE POOR: FROM THE INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

By reaching out to the poor in charity and justice, we serve Christ himself. And such, an authentic worship and praise are only possible when we care for one another as the divine Good Shepherd cares for us. To reiterate, from the perspective of *Laudato Si'*, the Integral ecology:

▣ Assumes that, in creation, everything is connected, everything is interlinked. Life is a network of relationships.

▣ Proposes that there are not two separate crises, one social and the other environmental, but only one complex socio-environmental crisis. This means, we must expand our evangelizing action to include social and environmental dimensions.

▣ Puts the environmental, economic, social, cultural, and everyday life ecology in dialogue with the ethical principles of the common good and justice between generations.

▣ Allows us to look at life from a deeper perspective. It is a for of spirituality, mysticism, and ethical commitment, a journey oriented toward new humanity embodied by St. Francis. We hear here an echo of St. Paul's teachings about a new way of being human in Christ (2Co 5.17; Eph 4.24; Col 3.10) and about "New heavens and a new earth where justice dwells" (2 Pe 3, 13)

To reach out to the poor is to treat him or her as our brother or sister. We must get closer, overcome our fears, just as Francis did with the lepers of his time.

**"STRETCH FORTH YOUR HAND TO THE POOR"**  
**(SIR 7:32)**

# REFLECTION:

“Francis considered himself to be a brother to the sun, the sea and the wind. Yet he also was very aware of his keen relationship to his fellow human beings. Wherever he went, he sowed seeds of peace and walked alongside the poor, the abandoned, the infirm and the outcast, the least of his brothers and sisters.” (FT, 2)

WHAT PLACE DOES THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE “LADY POVERTY OCCUPY IN YOUR LIFE?

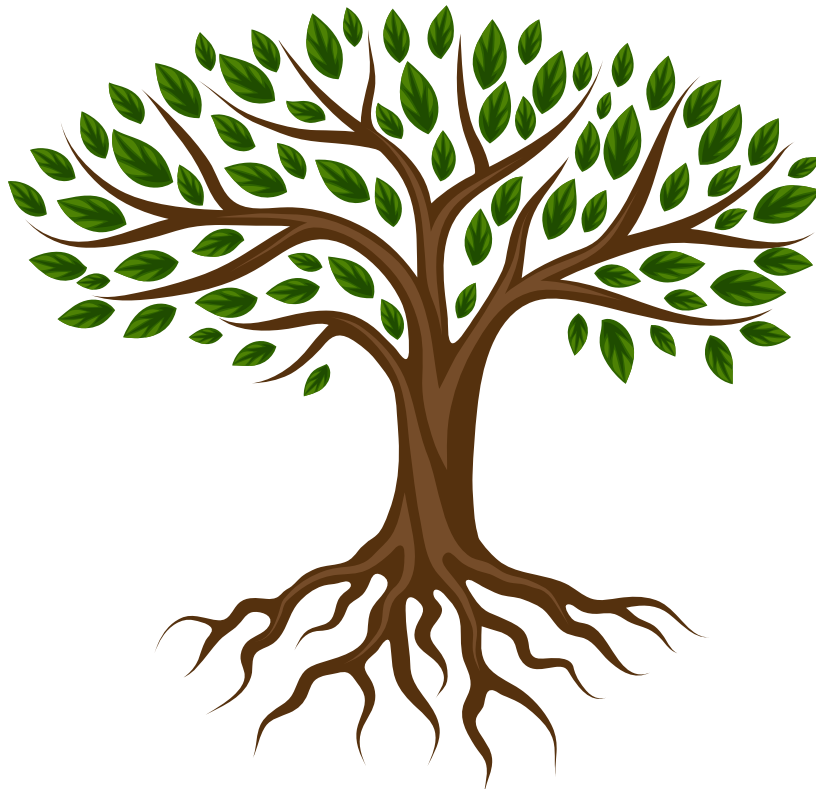
WHAT IS PREVENTING OR FACILITATING THAT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE POOR AS AN EXISTENTIAL REALITY?

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO BE ABLE TO EXPAND YOUR NOTION OF ECOLOGY SO THAT YOU’D GROW ON THE PATH OF INTEGRAL ECOLOGY AND SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR?



“STRETCH FORTH YOUR HAND TO THE POOR”  
(SIR 7:32)

## 2. A CONTEMPLATION OF REALITY



METAPHOR	SYMPTOMS	EVIDENCE
Foliage	Coronavirus pandemic	
The Trunk	Social Inequity pandemic	
The roots	What other pandemics?	

“STRETCH FORTH YOUR HAND TO THE POOR”  
(SIR 7:32)

## 2. A CONTEMPLATION OF REALITY

“This way of discarding others can take a variety of forms. It includes an obsessive effort to reduce labour costs with no concern for its grave consequences, since the unemployment that it directly generates leads to the expansion of poverty. A willingness to discard others is also expressed in systemic racism. It sometimes retreats underground only to reemerge. The shameful reality of racism reminds us that our supposed social progress is not as real or definitive as we may think.

Some economic systems have led to an undeniable economic growth, but that's not the same as integral human development. Wealth has increased, but alongside of it a great inequality. As a result, new forms of poverty are emerging. The claim that the modern world has reduced poverty is made by measuring poverty with criteria from the past that do not correspond to present-day realities.

In other times, for example, lack of access to electric energy was not considered a sign of poverty, nor was it a source of hardship. Poverty must always be understood and gauged in the context of the actual opportunities available in each concrete historical period. (FT 20-21)

“STRETCH FORTH YOUR HAND TO THE POOR”  
(SIR 7:32)

# 3. A DISCERNMENT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF OUR BROTHERHOOD



FOURTH WORLD DAY OF THE POOR 2020: “Stretch forth your hand to the poor” (Sir 7:32) - Pope Francis



THIRD WORLD DAY OF THE POOR 2019: The hope of the poor shall not perish for ever



SECOND WORLD DAY OF THE POOR 2018: This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him

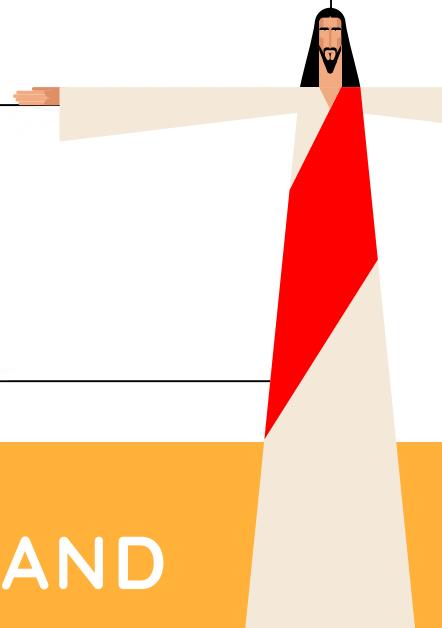


FIRST WORLD DAY OF THE POOR 2017: Let us love, not with words but with deeds

**“STRETCH FORTH YOUR HAND TO THE POOR”  
(SIR 7:32)**

## 4. A COMMITMENT FROM SAMARITANITY

	Current initiatives	Commitments
Personal Action		
Community Action		
Collective /		
Global Action		



“STRETCH FORTH YOUR HAND  
TO THE POOR”  
(SIR 7:32)