

Extracts from the Message of Pope Francis for the
SECOND WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

*33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
18 November 2018*



Introduction: This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him” (Ps 34:6). The words of the Psalmist become our own whenever we are called to encounter the different conditions of suffering and marginalization experienced by so many of our brothers and sisters whom we are accustomed to label generically as “the poor”(n. 1). ...The poor are the first to recognize God’s presence and to testify to his closeness in their lives. God remains faithful to his promise; and even in the darkness of the night, he does not withhold the warmth of his love and consolation. However, for the poor to overcome their oppressive situation, they need to sense the

presence of brothers and sisters who are concerned for them and, by opening the doors of their hearts and lives, make them feel like friends and family (n. 6).

1. We are told, in the first place, that the Lord listens to the poor who cry out to him; he is good to those who seek refuge in him, whose hearts are broken by sadness, loneliness and exclusion. The Lord listens to those who, trampled in their dignity, still find the strength to look up to him for light and comfort. He listens to those persecuted in the name of a false justice, oppressed by policies unworthy of the name, and terrified by violence, yet know that God

is their Savior. What emerges from this prayer is above all the sense of abandonment and trust in a Father who can hear and understand (n. 1).

“We were nothing ...” As daughters of Mary and Marie Rivier, may we grow in poverty of spirit and be counted among the anawim.

Par l’intercession de Marie, notre Mère et Gardienne, accorde-nous la faveur de sa canonisation.

2. Psalm 34 uses three verbs to describe the poor person in his relationship with God. First of all, “to cry”. Poverty cannot be summed up in a word; it becomes a cry that rises to heaven and reaches God. What does the cry of the poor express, if not their suffering and their solitude, their disappointment and their hope? We can ask ourselves how their plea, which rises to the presence of God, can fail to reach our own ears, or leave us cold and indifferent. On this *World Day of the Poor*, we are called to make a serious examination of conscience, to see if we are truly capable of hearing the cry of the poor (n. 2).

“We had nothing ...” As daughters of Mary and Marie Rivier, may we grow in poverty of spirit and be counted among the anawim.

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3. The second verb is “to answer”. The Psalmist tells us that the Lord does not only listen to the cry of the poor, but responds. His answer, as seen in the entire history of salvation, is to share lovingly in the lot of the poor. ... God’s answer to the poor is always a saving act that heals wounds of body and soul, restores justice and helps to live life anew in dignity. God’s answer is also a summons to those who believe in him to do likewise, within the limits of what is humanly possible (n. 3).

“We could do nothing ...” As daughters of Mary and Marie Rivier, may we grow in poverty of spirit and be counted among the anawim.

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4. The third verb is “to free”. In the Bible, the poor live in the certainty that God intervenes on their behalf to restore their dignity. Poverty is not something that anyone desires, but is caused by selfishness, pride, greed and injustice. These are evils as old as the human race itself, but also sins in which the innocent are caught up, with tragic effects at the level of social life. God’s act of liberation is a saving act for those who lift up to him their sorrow and distress. The bondage of poverty is shattered by the power of God’s intervention. Many of the Psalms recount and celebrate this history of salvation mirrored in the personal life of the poor (n. 4).

“Would you doubt that it was God who managed everything?” As daughters of Mary and Marie Rivier, may we grow in poverty of spirit and be counted among the anawim.

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5. Faith naturally inspires a message of hope. Often it is precisely the poor who can break through our indifference, born of a worldly and narrow view of life. The cry of the poor is also a cry of hope that reveals the certainty of future liberation. This hope is grounded in the love of God, who does not abandon those who put their trust in him (cf. *Rom* 8:31-39). As Saint Teresa of Avila writes in *The Way of Perfection*: “Poverty comprises many virtues. It is a vast domain. I tell you, whoever despises all earthly goods is master of them all” (2:5). It is in the measure in which we are able to discern authentic good that we become rich before God and wise in our own eyes and in those of others. It is truly so. To the extent that we come to understand the true meaning of riches, we grow in humanity and become capable of sharing (n. 9).

“To convince the whole world that this foundation was her work, Mary made use of puny creatures without talents, means, or resources, having

nothing to offer except themselves....” As daughters of Mary and Marie Rivier, may we grow in poverty of spirit and be counted among the anawim.

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