



November 19, 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In declaring this the first World Day of the Poor, Pope Francis has given us a great gift. The approach of Advent – a season known for giving, but also for rampant consumerism – makes this an opportune time to reflect on the kind of society we want to live in.

Surrounded by wealth and comfort, many in our culture resist any form of material or physical self-denial. At the same time, others in our midst have no roof over their head, struggle daily to feed themselves and their families, and go without the essentials of life necessary to survive.

Pope Francis has declared a World Day of the Poor, not a World Day of Prayer for the Poor. Of course, he wants us to pray, but the Holy Father also wants us to examine our lives closely and see how we are being called to help the needy around us.

I invite you to read the Pope's [letter for the World Day of the Poor](#), in which he condemns "the contrast between the empty words so frequently on our lips and the concrete deeds against which we are called to measure ourselves." In response, let us love, not just with words but with deeds.

This first World Day of the Poor is an opportunity to join with your loved ones in doing something concrete for the needy. I invite you to sit down with your family, chat with friends, and ask the Holy Spirit where and how you can help make a difference. Our webpage rcav.net/poor contains the Pope's letter and other resources.

Whether it's personally assisting someone you know, volunteering with an agency that helps the poor, or donating money to a church or organization that is equipped to bring aid to those in need, I ask every Catholic in the Archdiocese of Vancouver to join action to prayer so that those who lack food, clothing, shelter, and companionship will find it through us.

The Holy Father says that this day is meant to "encourage believers to react against a culture of discard and waste, and to embrace the culture of encounter." He wants us to create moments of friendship with the poor, who, he reminds us, are not a "problem," but "a resource from which to draw as we strive to accept and practise in our lives the essence of the Gospel."

The World Day of the Poor reminds us of the special love the Lord Jesus had for the poor. May our hands, feet, and lips be his, as we manifest his concern for the needy in our community and around the world.

With cordial greetings and the assurance of my prayers for you and your families, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,
+ J. Michael Miller, CSB
Archbishop of Vancouver