

Weekly Message from Fr William for Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time 2022

Dear People of St Mary's, this Sunday is Remembrance Sunday when we commemorate all those who have lost their lives in military conflict. We pray for them and we offer mass intentions for them.

This Sunday is also the sixth World Day of the Poor. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has displaced millions and caused global economic turbulence, with food shortages and rising energy costs. This will affect the poorest especially this winter.

In his message for this sixth World Day of the Poor, Pope Francis reminds us that from the earliest days of the Church, attention to the needs of the poor was a feature of the Christian community. Where the poor are concerned, he says, 'what matters is rolling up our sleeves and putting faith into practice'. I'm looking into whether we can as a parish use our parish hall and our time and service to be part of the Warm Welcome initiative that provides a warm space, a warm welcome, and a hot drink for those struggling with energy costs. Let me know if you'd like to help with this.

Before being the objects of our charity, those who are poor 'can help set us free from the snares of anxiety and superficiality', says Pope Francis. That is why the pope insists that our work is never *for* the poor, but *with* the poor and *of* the poor, work that brings people together. (*Fratelli Tutti* 169)

The Second Vatican Council reminds us that Christ was sent by the Father 'to preach the good news to the poor...to restore the broken-hearted' (Luke 4:18), and that in the same way the church surrounds with love all who are afflicted with human infirmity. (*Vatican 2 - Lumen Gentium* 8)

At the last World Day of the Poor in 2021, Pope Francis taught us that 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'.

And here's what Mother Saint Teresa of Calcutta wrote about our relationship to the poor: 'Love is expressed first in *being with* before *doing to* someone. 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.' (*St Teresa of Calcutta, A Simple Path*, p91)

Let's look for opportunities to be with the poor and to be for them, especially as we head into winter, and especially when we get into the Christmas season. Why not volunteer for our own Warm Welcome initiative mentioned above? Or put on a Christmas Dinner at St Mary's during the Christmas Octave for those who might have missed out... Let me know.



Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, 13 november 2022