Prayer Service Ending the Week of the Poor

November 15, 2026

Accompaniment of Our Poor

Introduction

By now, we have each, in our own way, experienced the Tenth Annual Week of the Poor, as declared by the Church, and have ministered, learned, prayed and experienced in ways that have helped us grow spiritually.

As we close this week, what are we left with? Learnings and experiences increase in their impact if we have something by which we can move them from consciousness to a part of our Catholic Christian and Franciscan practice each day.

What we have with us to help us continue to grow in practicing our faith is the practice of accompaniment. Together with prayer, contemplation, and education, accompaniment helps us to make sense of how we are doing in practicing our faith.

As we open our hearts and minds to the presence and accompaniment of God with us, let us pray. Prayer Inspired by Pope Leo XIV's Dilexi Te (I Have Loved You)

> *Christ Jesus, the poor Messiah, you were born in a stable, unwelcome at the inn, raised in a family that laid no claim to land, who worked with their hands*
>
> *and gleaned from the fields.*
>
> *Messiah of and for the poor, you were a traveling preacher with no place to lay your head, and found welcome on the margins.*
>
> *Christ our salvation, you brought liberty to the oppressed and poor, you touched the leper and healed the sick, inviting all to know the primacy of the*
>
> *love of God.*
>
> *Lord Jesus Christ, you call us to holiness that is rooted in mercy. May we contemplate your love, that we may become attentive to the suffering and needs*
>
> *of others, and share in your work of liberation. Amen.*

Let us receive strength and direction for our hearts, and joy through the Psalms:

Psalm 92, 1-5

A reading from the Psalms:



[1] It is good to praise the Lord
and make music to your name, O Most High,
[2] proclaiming your love in the morning
and your faithfulness at night,
[3] to the music of the ten-stringed lyre
and the melody of the harp.

[4] For you make me glad by your deeds, Lord;
I sing for joy at what your hands have done.
[5] How great are your works, Lord,
how profound your thoughts!

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

Let us Pray.

Prayer for the Poor

God of Justice,

Open our eyes

to see you in the face of the poor.

Open our ears

to hear you in the cries of the exploited.

Open our mouths

to defend you in the public squares

as well as in private deeds.

Remind us that what we do

to the least ones,

we do to you. Amen. -- USCCB

Reflection:

Accompaniment is a very important part of living and practicing our faith. We know that God always accompanies us. And the Church's enduring commitment to accompanying others begins in Scripture.

When we speak of accompaniment, we are speaking of presence; our presence with and alongside others.

And presence does not have to be complicated. I am reminded of when I was a young social worker and was asked to work with a young woman who was diagnosed with multiple

personality disorder. One day she was feeling particularly frightened and vulnerable. As she wept, and as both of us wondered about what would happen next, I sat next to her with an arm around her, and with my other hand holding her hand tightly. I wanted her to know that she was not alone; I wanted to be present to her. As she became more calm and open, personalities began to come forth one by one to meet me. And we both learned that we were OK; she could trust me with her brokenness and I could cope calmly and with compassion. All I needed to do was be there and say something that communicated my presence there with her when needed.

Catholic teaching on the poor is rooted in Scripture, affirmed in the Catechism, and developed in the Church's social doctrine. It calls every Christian to recognize Christ in the least of our brothers and sisters and to respond with justice, mercy, and love. To serve the poor is to serve Christ Himself.

Care for the poor is woven throughout the entire biblical tradition. God reveals Himself as the defender of the vulnerable, and He commands His people to act with justice and mercy:

"You shall not oppress the poor or vulnerable. God will hear their cry." (Ex 22:20–26)

- **A portion of the harvest is set aside for the poor and the stranger.** (Lev 19:9–10)
- **"Speak out in defense of the poor."** (Prov 31:8–9)
- **"Blessed are the poor, theirs is the kingdom of God."** (Lk 6:20–23)
- In the Last Judgment, Christ identifies Himself with the poor: **"What you do for the least among you, you do for Me."** (Mt 25:34–40)

Presence manifests accompaniment through our behavior. We can also demonstrate presence by spiritually "being with" or remembering in prayer those who are poor.

Journeying with those whose poverty is experienced through grieving or with those who are in the process of dying by being present to them and by listening to them is also a powerful form of love and accompaniment. The goal of accompanying our poor is to lead them into the experience of belonging.

And where is our beloved Father St. Francis of Assisi in all of this?

Well, he is right there with the poor that were in his midst. He learned about poverty directly from the poor; not by bringing in boxes of food and other goods and leaving but by eating and interacting with them and dialoguing with them about their lives and about poverty. Then he went and lived it himself. In doing this, Francis mirrored the life and example of Christ.

One gift that flows from accompaniment is this: Not only does the person(s) we are accompanying benefit from having been accompanied, but we too grow and learn from the experience. Recall a time that you provided presence to someone and you find yourself thinking afterward: "Who profited more from that experience? I think I may have."

It would be easy for us, if we did not know any better, to consider those we are trying to help, as the lepers of our society, or of our Order, when in fact it is we, who are the lepers because of how we have at times not cared for our brothers and sisters. We who have not opened the doors to the stranger, we who have not fed or cared for those orphaned in parts of society, in the church or in the Order. We who have not shared what we have been so freely given, and gained only by God's grace.

Intercessions

Let us be mindful of and thankful for God's accompaniment which is open to all of us as we pray:

Our response is: "Generous God, hear our prayer."

Loving God, give the church the grace to be a "poor church for the poor," and so become an even greater sign to the world of Christ's charity for the least and those in need, we pray:

Give the people of our nation the collective will to make the economic, social, and political choices to reverse the human- made disaster of poverty, and so offer a new vision of life and society, we pray:

Give those in elected office the conviction and courage to promote social policies and economic structures which reduce poverty and promote a just distribution of the world's goods, we pray:

Give those who struggle with poverty renewed hope, economic and educational opportunity, and dignified work in safe conditions for just wages, that they might live in economic security, we pray:

Give us open hearts that we might willingly share our gifts with others, follow Jesus in his own poverty, and seek his face in the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters, we pray:

Give to Catholic Charities and other organizations of good will the leadership and resources needed to reduce poverty in the communities they serve, we pray:

O God, look upon the poverty of our hearts with compassion and love. Enable us to give lovingly and freely of our possessions and gifts. As we continue to grow in serving our poor, may we, with the poor and needy, receive joy in this life and fullness of life forever. This we ask through the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and through the intercession of all the saints, especially of those whose legacy of service we carry on today. Grant that we may be faithful as they were faithful so that we too may live with you forever. Amen.

Before our closing prayer, let us pray through the gift of music.

"Will You Come and Follow Me," also known as "The Summons," is a contemporary Christian hymn written by John L. Bell in 1987. The hymn was composed after Bell joined the Iona Community in Scotland and was first published in their collection *Heaven Shall Not Wait: Songs of Creation, the Incarnation, and the Life of Jesus.*

The hymn's lyrics present a series of questions posed by Jesus to potential disciples, inviting them to consider the cost and commitment of following Him. Each verse challenges the listener to reflect on their willingness to follow Jesus, even into the unknown or uncomfortable.

As you listen to the music, you are invited to also pray with the lyrics which will be shown below.

Link for the Hymn "The Summons"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0aAkOe87mo

Lyrics for The Summons

Will you come and follow me
If I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
And never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
Will you let my name be known,
Will you let my life be grown
In you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind
If I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
And never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
Should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer
In you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see
If I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free
And never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean,
And do such as this unseen,
And admit to what I mean
In you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide
If I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
And never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
To reshape the world around,
Through my sight and touch and sound
In you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true
When you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
And never be the same.
In your company I'll go
Where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
In you and you in me.

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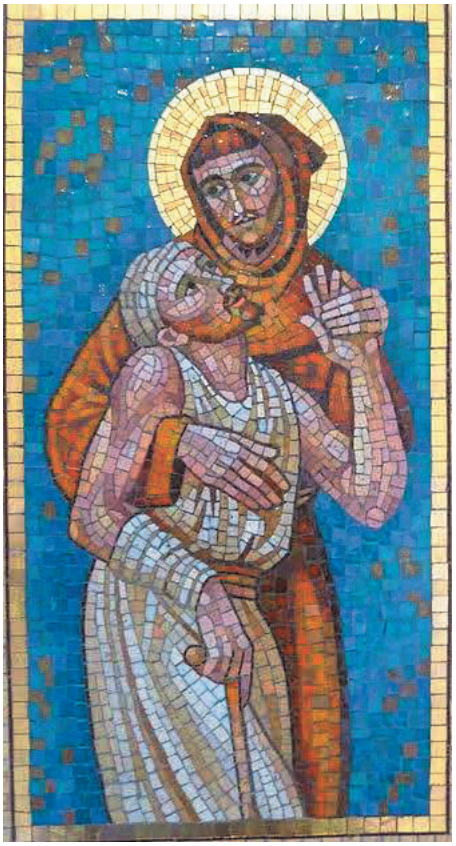
Closing Prayer

As we take the experience of this week of the poor out into the world with us, let us pray that we continue to grow in our understanding and practice of accompaniment of our brothers and sisters throughout the world:

Building Communities of Justice

Holy Spirit,
We praise and thank you!

You anoint us to
bring glad tidings to the poor
proclaim liberty to captives
recover sight for the blind
free the oppressed
and build communities in keeping
with God's vision of justice.



Show us how to be
light to the world
salt of the earth
seeds that sprout love
and leaven that infuses humanity
with the desire to promote solidarity.

Help us to listen so that
those in poverty can lead our efforts to
proclaim a more hopeful vision
liberate captives from injustice
heal the blindness of the powerful
free us all from self-centeredness
and build community to overcome poverty.

Amen. --Archdiocese of Chicago

Go in peace to love and to serve the world.

R. Thanks be to God!