



“Make real friends with the poor.” (Romans 12:16)

Pope Francis has declared **Sunday November 19** as the first **World Day of the Poor**, and is asking Christians who aren't materially poor to reach out to low income people in what the Holy Father calls the “culture of encounter”. This is not simply about serving low income people; it's about making them part of our communities and our lives.

Excerpts from the [Message of His Holiness Pope Francis](#) for the First World Day of the Poor

If we truly wish to encounter Christ, we have to touch his body in the suffering bodies of the poor...

“We may think of the poor simply as the beneficiaries of our occasional volunteer work, or of impromptu acts of generosity that appease our conscience. However good and useful such acts may be for making us sensitive to people's needs and the injustices that are often their cause, they ought to lead to a true *encounter* with the poor and a *sharing* that becomes a way of life. Our prayer and our journey of discipleship and conversion find the confirmation of their evangelic authenticity in precisely such charity and sharing. This way of life gives rise to joy and peace of soul, because we touch with our own hands the *flesh of Christ*.”

If we truly wish to encounter Christ, we have to touch his body in the suffering bodies of the poor, as a response to the sacramental communion bestowed in the Eucharist. The Body of Christ, broken in the sacred liturgy, can be seen, through charity and sharing, in the faces and persons of the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters.

We are called, then, to draw near to the poor, to encounter them, to meet their gaze, to embrace them and to let them feel the warmth of love that breaks through their solitude. Their outstretched hand is also an invitation to step out of our certainties and comforts...

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We know how hard it is for our contemporary world to see poverty clearly for what it is. Yet in myriad ways poverty challenges us daily, in faces marked by suffering, marginalization, oppression, violence, torture and imprisonment, war, deprivation of freedom and dignity, ignorance and illiteracy, medical emergencies and shortage of work, trafficking and slavery, exile, extreme poverty and forced migration. Poverty has the face of women, men and children exploited by base interests, crushed by the machinations of power and money. What a bitter and endless list we would have to compile were we to add the poverty born of social injustice, moral degeneration, the greed of a chosen few, and generalized indifference!

Tragically, in our own time, even as ostentatious wealth accumulates in the hands of the privileged few, often in connection with illegal activities and the appalling exploitation of human dignity, there is a scandalous growth of poverty in broad sectors of society throughout our world. Faced with this scenario, we cannot remain passive, much less resigned.

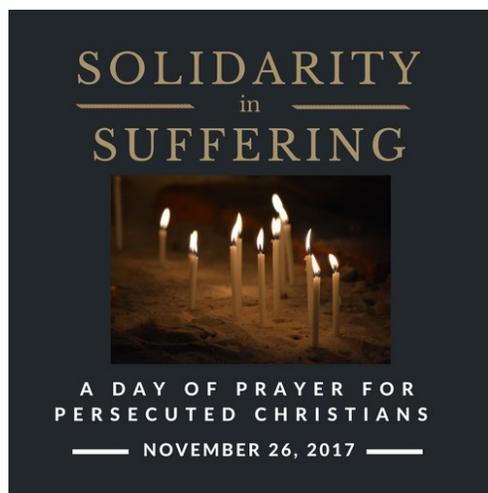
The poor are not a problem: they are a resource from which to draw as we strive to accept and practice in our lives the essence of the Gospel.

BUY NOTHING DAY: Friday November 24

Join the movement to **NOT SHOP** on Thanksgiving or the day after. Don't feed into the joyless, angry frenzy of consumption. Don't support the corporations that force their low-wage workers to come into work on Thanksgiving. Instead, spend time with your family and low income neighbors.

THE MORE YOU CONSUME
THE LESS YOU LIVE

Day of Prayer for Persecuted Christians: Sunday November 26



Bishop Matano asks that all parishes in our dioceses pray for **persecuted Christians** during the Prayers of the Faithful at Mass on **November 26** using prayers such as:

For those suffering because of their Christian faith, that the Holy Spirit may fortify them with the courage to remain strong in faith, as well as with the charity to forgive their persecutors, we pray to the Lord.

For those who persecute Christians and other religious minorities, that the light of God's truth and mercy may penetrate their hearts, and that they may come to recognize the common humanity of all peoples and cease committing acts of hatred, we pray to the Lord.

Other prayers for the day can be found on the [USCCB web site](#).

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