

FROM OUR BISHOP



Letter from Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of Arlington,
on the World Day of the Poor

“Stretch forth your hand to the poor” (Sir 7:32)

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On Sunday, November 15, our Holy Father Pope Francis will lead the Universal Church in observing the fourth annual World Day of the Poor. He invites us to consider how we can faithfully embrace a fundamental Christian calling in our lives as Catholics: our responsibility to serve our neighbor, especially those who are most vulnerable.

Our lives, he says, should reflect the freedom found through our Lord Jesus by a generosity that “supports the weak, consoles the afflicted, relieves suffering and restores dignity to those stripped of it.” This radical generosity, he tells us, “is a condition for a fully human life.”

Further, this responsibility to serve our neighbor is essential to our Faith. Our worship, sacraments and prayer, and living in solidarity with the poor and suffering, are inseparable. Sacred Scripture tells us, “Stretch forth your hand to the poor” (Sir 7:32).

Within the Diocese of Arlington, we have many opportunities to serve those who are materially or spiritually poor through our parishes and Catholic Charities. We live a sacramental life of faith so Christ can work through us to serve those who are hungry or homeless, sick or elderly, isolated or vulnerable, anxious or depressed, in prison, or new to our country. There are many ways to do this, no matter what our age or phase of life. I encourage you, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to discern how you might further commit to serving those in need.

As we extend our hands to help the poor, may we become more aware of the many blessings and answered prayers we have received from our Heavenly Father, through his son, Jesus Christ, and his Holy Spirit.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge
Bishop of Arlington



WEEKLY REFLECTION

Happiness Is Within

We humans have a strange inclination to search for the wrong thing in the wrong place. We believe we'll be happy and satisfied if only we can acquire a new car, a new house, or more time for our hobbies. In spite of having experienced, time and again, that these things will not satisfy our hearts, we continually stir up new expectations that will do nothing but disappoint.

We think happiness is to be found outside ourselves, whereas it is really to be found inside ourselves, “The kingdom of God is among you,” says Jesus (Lk 17:21). Things will not make us happy. On the contrary, they often prevent us from discovering the reign of God within us.

Become conscious of the fact that deep inside of you is found a temple of the Trinity, where the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit live and where you are immersed in love. You don't have to “seek” happiness. It is enough that you are conscious of the treasure you carry within you. The Christian faith teaches us that God lives within us, which is only a confirmation of what humankind has actually always known: Paradise lost exists within us. This we have forgotten. But we can again become conscious that it exists and where it exists. We can reclaim our riches when we are alone with God and stop seeking happiness outside ourselves.



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