

"In the beginning
was the Word,
and the Word was
with God, and the
Word was God."
—John 1:1

The Lord's Flock
Growth
DIGEST
PASTORAL GROWTH SERIES



“ Word of God: Mathew 5:1-12(Beatitudes) “

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In 1991, The Church initiated a plenary council which emphasized the following to be our common vision:

1. We should be a church of disciples.
2. We should learn how to be the church of the poor.
3. We should promote the new evangelization.

Our mission should be:

1. To be disciples of Christ
2. To be one with the poor in our service
3. To proclaim Christ in the new evangelization (going to the peripheries)

The first word of Jesus in the beatitude says: *“Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God.”*

Jesus did not live as a noble person but as a simple man. He went around doing good and working outside the walls of Jerusalem where he cared and lived with the outcasts of society.

Many of our countrymen are living in poverty. While we cannot remove the symptoms, we can surely help decrease the cause of poverty. We are not only poor materially, but also spiritually, culturally, religiously, and emotionally.

The verse where the theme of 2015 as the Year of the Poor was taken is in **Acts 3:5-6**: Peter said, *“I have neither silver nor gold,*

but what I do have I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean, [rise and] walk.”

The concept of *the love for the poor* in the Catechism of the Catholic Church says that: *“God blesses those who come to the aid of the poor and rebukes those who turn away from them.”*

Jesus said in Matthew 5: 42, *“Give to him who begs from you. Do not refuse him who would borrow from you.”* And in Matthew 10: 8, He said *“You receive without pay, give without pay.”*

James 5:1-6 = Warning to the Rich = *“Come now, you rich, weep and wail over your impending miseries. Your wealth has rotted away, your clothes have become moth-eaten, your gold and silver have corroded, and that corrosion will be a testimony against you; it will devour your flesh like a fire. You have stored up treasure for the last days. Behold, the wages you withheld from the workers who harvested your fields are crying aloud, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on earth in luxury and pleasure; you have fattened your hearts for the day of slaughter. You have condemned; you have murdered the righteous one; he offers you no resistance.”*

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16: 19-31 again illustrates Luke’s concern with Jesus’ attitude toward the rich and the poor.

Likewise, the story of Job teaches us that we came (at birth) from nothing and that we will return (to God) with nothing; and that material things are not of utmost importance in this life.

What are our responsibilities to the poor?

Pope Francis' message is to negate all negative mentality towards the poor; and that whoever has "more" must share with those who have "less." Then we will be blessed by God.

Give mercy and compassion. It is a work of mercy when we come to the aid of our neighbour in spiritual and bodily necessity through spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

Spiritual works of mercy:

1. Instructing. We should teach them what is right.
2. Advising. We should not only be listening to advices but be good counsellors as well.
3. Consoling
4. Comforting

The spiritual works of mercy will help strengthen our soul.

Forgiving or bearing the wrong patiently is a very important element in the practice of spiritual works of mercy.

The **corporal works** of mercy is what we see every day. Of which are:

1. Feeding the hungry
2. Sheltering the homeless
3. Clothing the naked
4. Visiting the sick
5. Visiting the imprisoned
6. Burying the dead

When we talk about the poor, we should be reminded that they are not only lacking in material things, but they also need to be comforted, visited, and clothed. On the other hand, the poor in spirit needs spiritual nourishment through spiritual formation.

From the book of Hebrews, it says "When trials come, don't take trials as punishment of God. Trials make us strong in faith."

We are poor ourselves, and yet with God, [He] makes us rich in our lifetime spiritually. Various forms of material deprivation, unjust oppression, physical and psychological illness, and death are parts of human misery, which is [an] obvious sign of the inherited condition and worthy of the need of salvation, which man find himself in as a consequence of original sin.

Man is imperfect and has a tendency to do evil. But God will always be the source of hope and grace in order that we can counteract what is evil and the presence of evil. We have to be sensitive that God will never separate from us. He is always with us. He is Emmanuel. He never lets us down.

The mystery elicited the compassion of Christ the Savior, who really looking upon himself, identified Himself with the least of his brethren. Hence those who are oppressed by poverty are the object of the preferential love on the part of the church. In spite of the failings of many of our members, we must live towards their relief, defense, liberation, numerous works of charity, which remains indispensable always and everywhere.

What can we (The Lord's Flock) do in the year of the poor? Let our presence be felt and give realistic and meaningful service to the poor.

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