

## Prayer Service on the Option for the Poor and the Vulnerable

Opening Prayer: Day is drawing to a close, yet our minds, though needing rest, gather in the images of those whose needs for daily living have gone unfulfilled. This night the poor..., the hungry..., the neglected..., and those without a place to lay their heads... are present to us, asking us to remember them and to care for their needs in love.

CD: "The Cry of the Poor"  
John Foley, SJ



Reading: 1 John 3:17-18

If we are rich and see others in need, yet close our hearts against them, how can we claim that we love God? My children, our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action.

Reflection: In this short yet profound passage, John reminds us we are called to put our faith into action, but Jesus also said: Voice 1: "The poor you will always have with you" (reflective pause)  
Voice 2: "The poor you will always have with you" (reflective pause)  
Voice 3: "The poor you will always have with you." (reflective pause)

This evening, the question we dare to ask ourselves is why?

Why does poverty continue to exist? And what structures in society have sustained the cycle of poverty from generation to generation, from millennia to millennia, from the time of Jesus to our time today?

(Please take a moment to quietly reflect on these questions and share a brief thought from your heart.)

Canticle of Samuel: (Please pray in unison) Edward F. Gabriele "Act Justly, Love Tenderly, Walk Humbly: Prayers for Peace and Justice"

My heart exults in the living God,  
I rejoice in the One who loves me.  
I have conquered my oppressors.  
I rejoice in the victory God has put before me.  
There is no holy one like this God.  
There is no rock like Yahweh.  
The bows of the mighty and the arrogant wealthy are broken,  
while the weak and feeble are given strong limbs.  
The well-fed haughty ones must hire themselves out  
while the humble hungry feast on fine food.  
God puts to death and gives life,  
Casting down to the nether world and raising us up again.  
Yahweh makes poor and makes rich,  
Humbling and exalting beyond our dreaming.  
God raises the needy from the dust, from the ashes the poor are lifted  
To take their places in our midst and to make glory their heritage!  
For not by strength of mere humans do we survive,  
But by the strength of God who has exalted the Anointed One!



## Closing Prayer

God of justice and compassion,  
We ask forgiveness for the widening gulf between rich and poor,  
For the use of money as a measure of all things,  
For the culture of self-gratification,  
For the continuing disparities between those that have so much and those who have so little.  
And for the suffering of those people who are excluded from the table of abundance.

Forgive us for our focus on material goods,  
And our part in the worship of economic growth  
In a world where resources are limited  
and where we are already using more than our fair share.

Forgive us for going along with what is easy,  
For failing to come to grips with the problems of change  
And to engage in the complexity of social issues.

Fill us with a living faith that we may become lively seeds of your kingdom,  
Continually growing in your way of love,  
Instruments of personal and social reconciliation,  
Vehicles for a new dawn when those in poverty  
Are welcomed to the table where compassion and justice meet.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.  
We ask this through Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

Education for Justice- based on a prayer by Alan Litherland



**Poverty is not an accident.  
Like slavery and apartheid,  
it is man-made and  
can be removed by  
the actions of  
human beings.**

- Nelson Mandela

