

FEAST OF ST FRANCIS

Internationally, people who lack food and shelter for minimal needs are said to be living in absolute poverty. Poverty in Australia, however, is generally relative poverty. People are considered poor if their living standards fall below an overall community standard, and they are unable to participate fully in the ordinary activities of society.

Poverty hardly seems like an ideal, yet at the heart of Franciscan spirituality is this one word – *poverty*. For Francis, poverty was not about living simply, it was about being deprived in a state of need. To be poor means literally that – to be poor. What does it mean in modern terms? Insecurity, vulnerability, not knowing where to get a job or where the next meal is coming from?

Francis tells his companion “when a poor man approaches, always remember that he comes in the name of Christ, who assumed our poverty” (Lawrence Cunningham, ed., *Brother Francis*, pp. 128-129). When have you encountered the poor person? How did you respond to them? We often think that we should ‘give to the poor’. Are there ways in which we can receive from the poor? We also remember Lady Poverty who can be seen as the symbol of the paradoxes of the Gospel: richness in poverty, life in death, strength in weakness, peace in conflict.

This year, on the Feast of St. Francis let us reflect on our own attitude toward the poor. We pray that God will meet the needs of the poor people as we work to lighten their burdens and to share the earth’s goods with them.

We continue our thoughts and prayers throughout October particularly during Anti-Poverty Week. This is an International annual event held during the week coinciding with the U.N.’s International Anti-Poverty Day (17 October), and aims to:

- Strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and hardship around the world and within Australia; and
- Encourage research, discussion and action to address these problems, including action by individuals, communities, organisations and governments.



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*As poor persons, we stand in utter and absolute need, unable to go it alone.
As poor persons, we stand dependent before our God, who knows our need and
hears our cry.*

*As poor persons we come to know the God who loves us as we are.
As poor persons, we identify with all other poor persons.*

*Help us, most loving God, to treasure the poor people in our midst, to share our
goods, and to receive the gifts that poor people offer to us.*

Help us to not be angry or resentful toward them.

Help us to know that we are, indeed, one of them before you.

Amen



HAPPY FEASTDAY!

Dates to remember:

<i>1 October</i>	International Day of Older Persons
<i>11-17 October</i>	National Anti-Poverty Week
<i>16 October</i>	World Food Day
<i>17 October</i>	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
<i>18 October</i>	World Mission Sunday
<i>24 October</i>	United Nations Day
<i>27 October</i>	Day of Prayer in the "Spirit of Assisi"

Sources: *Praying with Francis of Assisi* Joseph M. Stoutzenberger and John D. Boher
Francis the Journey and the Dream Murray Bodo
www.antipovertyweek.org.au

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