

**WORLD DAY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE
20 February**

This is what I want from you

To do justice,

To love compassionately and

To walk humbly with your God

(Micah 6:8)

The General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed 20 February as World Day of Social Justice. This day is important for all in our world today and particularly for Franciscans as you *live in the world as promoters of justice and as messengers and agents of peace, overcoming evil and doing good* (GC 68.1).

You are invited and asked to join with your community in prayer for this day. Below is a prayer developed by members of the USG/UISG Secretariat Commission for JPIC in Rome. The dream is that all throughout the world will not only be aware of this day but join with our brothers and sisters everywhere in prayer on February 20.

This day also invites us to efforts in advocacy and holding our governments accountable. The observance of the day should contribute to the further consolidation of the efforts of the international community in poverty eradication, promotion of full employment and decent work, gender equity and access to social well-being and justice for all.

We reflect:

Option for and with the Poor and Vulnerable

“It is the strict duty of justice and truth not to allow fundamental human needs to remain unsatisfied and not to allow those burdened by such needs to perish. It is also necessary to help these needy people to acquire expertise, to enter the circle of exchange, and to develop their skills in order to make the best use of their capacities and resources.” Pope John Paul II, *On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum* (*Centesimus Annus* 1991) no. 34

Care for God’s Creation/Stewardship

“...international action to preserve the environment and to protect various forms of life on earth must not only guarantee a rational use of technology and science, but must also rediscover the authentic image of creation.” Pope Benedict XVI address to the United Nations, 18 April 2008

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Promotion of Peace

“It is too easy to throw back on others responsibility for injustices, if at the same time one does not realize how each one shares in it personally, and how personal conversion is needed first. ...For beneath an outward appearance of indifference in the heart of every man (and woman) is a will to live in brotherhood (and sisterhood) and a thirst for justice and peace, which is to be expanded.”

Pope Paul VI, *On the Occasion of the Eightieth Anniversary of the Encyclical Rerum Novarum (Octogesima Adveniens 1971)* no. 48

We ask:

- What has our government done to move the commitment forward to promote social justice?
- How is our government promoting the equitable distribution of income and greater access to resources through equity and equality and opportunity for all?
- As Franciscans ministering in a particular place, what can you do to help bring about a better understanding of reconciliation and a process of reconciliation in our local community, our place of ministry, our local parish, and our city?

This year and particularly on this World Day of Social Justice, we prepare to respond with concrete actions, dreams and hopes.

*We pray:***Psalm 122**

Pray for the peace of the world!
May all nations prosper as one.
May peace reign among all peoples,
and integrity dwell within every heart.
Then will friends and neighbours and former enemies as well,
cry out “peace be within you.”
For the good of the universe and in gratitude to the Beloved
let us serve the Holy One of all nations with glad hearts.

Material adapted from the ***World Day of Social Justice Prayer***
The Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, USG/UISG Secretariat.