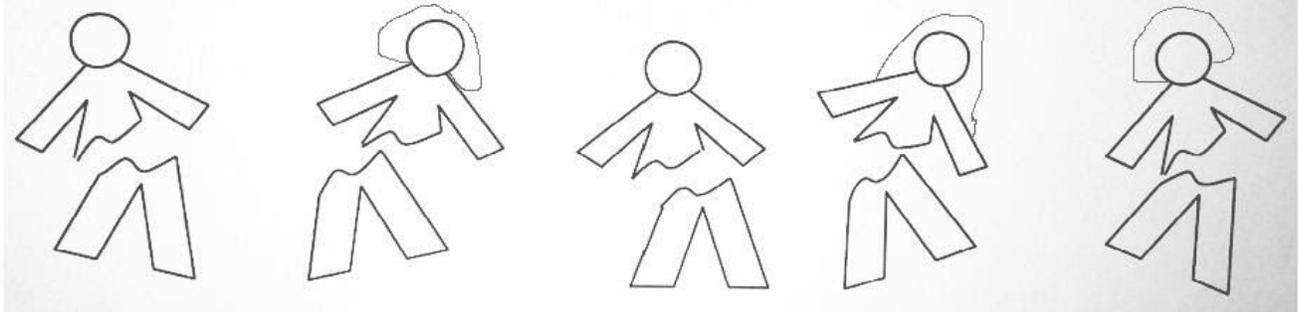


## FOURTH WORLD DAY OF THE POOR Community Prayer

### Preparation

It is suggested to place on the floor, some silhouettes of people made of cardboard or newspaper cut in half.



The open Bible will be placed on top of several silhouettes. The Bible is open to the quotation: Sirach, 7:32-36. To create an environment of sacred space, consider lighting some candles, or dimming lights, and having some background music.

### Introduction

Guide: *We begin in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.*

On November 15, Pope Francis invites the entire Church to celebrate the fourth World Day of Prayer for, of and with the Poor. For this reason, we want to create a sacred space to pray, from the heart, for and with the most vulnerable people. We want to unite ourselves with God so that Spirit may flood our bodies, minds, and spirits, and give us the strength and discernment to do our part in building the reign of God. May we help create a world of mutual relationships as sisters and brothers.

On the ground are represented, symbolically, the people who today live broken by poverty, injustice, hunger, violation of their rights, unemployment, and oppression. They suffer from those and now also the pandemic, the fear that it brings, and the mourning for so many loved ones who have died from the virus. We prepare for prayer by entering into a moment of inner silence.

**Guide:** A reading of the book of Sirach, 7:32-36

*“Stretch forth your hand to the poor, so that your blessing may lack nothing. Give your gift to all the living, and do not withhold your kindness from the dead. Do not avoid those who weep, but mourn with those who mourn. Do not hesitate to visit the sick, because for such things you will be loved. In whatever you do, remember your last days, and you will never sin”*  
*The Word of God.*

Let us listen to this fragment taken from Pope Francis' letter on the occasion of the IV World Day of the Poor.

### Reading:

This year's theme – “Stretch forth your hand to the poor” – is thus a summons to responsibility and commitment as men and women who are part of our one human family. This is not an option, but rather a sign of the authenticity of the faith we profess. Here again, the book of Sirach can help us. It

suggests concrete ways to support the most vulnerable and it uses striking images. First, it asks us to sympathize with those who are sorrowing: “Do not fail those who weep” (7:34). The time of pandemic forced us into strict isolation, making it impossible even to see and console friends and acquaintances grieving the loss of their loved ones. The sacred author also says: “Do not shrink from visiting the sick” (7:35). We have been unable to be close to those who suffer, and at the same time we have become more aware of the fragility of our own lives. The word of God allows for no complacency; it constantly impels us to acts of love.

At the same time, the command: “Stretch forth your hand to the poor” challenges the attitude of those who prefer to keep their hands in their pockets and to remain unmoved by situations of poverty in which they are often complicit. Indifference and cynicism are their daily food. Amid all these scenarios, “the excluded are still waiting. To sustain a lifestyle which excludes others, or to sustain enthusiasm for that selfish ideal, a globalization of indifference has developed. Almost without being aware of it, we end up being incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor, weeping for other people’s pain, and feeling a need to help them, as though all this were someone else’s responsibility and not our own” (Evangeliū Gaudium, 54). We cannot be happy until these hands that sow death are transformed into instruments of justice and peace for the whole world.

*(Sacred silence)*

**Guide:** We invite anyone who would like to share a phrase or word that is echoing in your heart.

***Our Father...***

**Guide:** Now I invite you to join us in praying the Lord's Prayer in a different way. After each phrase of the Lord's Prayer, whoever you like, please pick up one of the silhouettes of a broken person from the floor and put the pieces together to unite the human figure and leave it next to the Bible as a symbol that we want to collaborate from the Spirituality of the Incarnation to reconstruct the social fabric.

***All: Our Father, who art in heaven,***

**Reader:** We firmly believe that you are also here, incarnated in history, in our concrete reality. Father and Mother of all people, especially those who are excluded, those on the margins of life, those who are hungry, those who suffer violence, contempt, and ignorance.

***All: hallowed be thy name.***

**Reader:** Help us restore the sanctity of your name with our commitment as sisters. To know ourselves within the family of the poor and marginalized. To feel the joy of calling you our God.

***All: Thy kingdom come***

**Reader:** We ask you with strength: May your kingdom come. Your Kingdom of Love, of Freedom, of Justice, of Peace. We ask this with the faith to feel like sisters in community and with the desire to share and distribute in a family of equals.

***All: thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven.***

**Reader:** We ask you to keep us in the pathway, not to give up because of fear or tiredness. Help us to walk humbly with your people in the midst of this pandemic, to work together for personal and congregational transformation and the evolution of collective consciousness.

***All: Give us this day our daily bread***

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**Reader:** Without you we are nothing. Without you we can do nothing. Give us the bread and wine of your Gospel, do not let us hoard riches and push us to share what we are and have with those who need it most.

**All: and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us**

**Reader:** Forgive our indifference and lack of sensitivity to those who live in poverty and misery. Forgive our tendency to live enclosed in our world of well-being and comfort. Forgive our lack of love and care for the earth, of not recognizing that we live in a common home.

**All: and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**Reader:** Don't let us be tempted to believe that we can't do anything to change this world, and that all we can do is let ourselves be carried away by what most people do. Don't let us fall into the nets of consumerism. Don't let us fall into the doldrums of this time of pandemic. Free us from the evil of the lack of utopia, of the lack of dreams and hope. Give us the joy of faith, and the joy of feeling united with many other people who are doing their part to make this world a better place.

**All:** Amen

**Guide:** Let us remember the words of scripture: “*Stretch forth your hand to the poor, so that your blessing may lack nothing*”. To end this prayer space, prayerfully open your right hand, now look at it, as a symbol of the promise it holds for others, especially the promise to share with those most in need. And together we say the prayer proposed in the Encyclical Fratelli Tutti.

***A Prayer to the Creator***

Lord, Father of our human family,  
 you created all human beings equal in dignity:  
 pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit  
 and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter,  
 dialogue, justice and peace.  
 Move us to create healthier societies  
 and a more dignified world,  
 a world without hunger, poverty, violence and war.

May our hearts be open  
 to all the peoples and nations of the earth.  
 May we recognize the goodness and beauty  
 that you have sown in each of us,  
 and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects,  
 and shared dreams.  
 Amen.