

MISSION INTENTIONS

DECEMBER 2022-2023

We pray that volunteer non-profit organizations who work to improve the well-being of those in need never stop looking for ways to cooperate globally and find volunteers committed to the greater good.

Country Focus: Indonesia

Indonesia is a leader of nations in many ways: it is the biggest economy in Southeast Asia, it is one of the largest democracies in the world, and it is also the most generous country in the world according to the Charities Aid Foundation World Giving Index. In 2020, Indonesians donated more money and volunteer hours than any other country. According to the report, one of the reasons Indonesians are so



generous is because of their strong faith. Most Indonesians practice Islam, which encourages almsgiving. Additionally, about seven million Indonesians are Catholic, and caring for the poor is a priority of the Indonesian Catholic Church. One of the ways Indonesian Catholics support

those in need is by raising money to provide scholarships for students who cannot afford to go to school. Let us join the Holy Father in prayer this month, that all those who support the poor will never stop working for the common good.

Leading to Knowledge of the Faith

Since the earliest days of Christianity, all believers have been called to respond to the needs of the poor. In addition to offering spiritual support, we must also offer material support. Truly modeling the example of Christ means actively working to meet the needs of the poor. As the writer of I John states:

"If someone who has worldly means sees a brother in need and refuses him compassion, how can the love of God remain in him? Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth" (I John 3:17-18).

Saint Spotlight

There is a reason Saint Vincent de Paul is the patron saint of charitable societies. But Saint Vincent de Paul's path to sainthood wasn't always clear: it has been said that he only became a priest because it provided him with financial security. However, as we shall learn, Vincent de Paul came to fully embrace his vocation, spending his life in service of God and those living in poverty.

Born in France around 1580, Vincent de Paul was no stranger to the lives of the poor, having himself been born into a peasant family. After his ordination, he began ministering to wealthy families near Paris. It was during this time that he had a conversion experience, a result of his encounters with the servants of the wealthy families. When



Saint Vincent de Paul

Vincent de Paul saw their spiritual needs were not being met, he realized that something must be done. He founded the Congregation of the Mission, or the Vincentians, who devoted themselves to providing catechesis and a sacramental life for the rural poor. He also formed the Daughters of Charity to meet the physical needs of the poor and sick, and the Ladies of Charity to provide funding for their work. Saint Vincent de Paul also founded several hospitals, ransomed slaves, visited prisoners, and helped establish seminaries so that priests would be better trained to minister to the poor.

Saint Vincent de Paul is known as "The Apostle of Charity." His feast day is September 27. Saint Vincent de Paul, pray for us!

Formation for Life in Christ

Throughout his ministry, Jesus always demonstrated a special concern for the poor and vulnerable. He healed people whose illnesses had caused them to be banished from their communities, he brought his message of salvation to the poor, and he famously taught “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3). The Church continues to model Jesus’ love for the poor by living the Catholic social teaching theme of Option for the Poor and Vulnerable. This theme teaches us that we are called to place the needs of the poor and vulnerable first. Because their needs are more urgent, it is our duty to make sure they have what they need to live in dignity and become active participants in society. As Pope Benedict XVI wrote in Deus Caritas Est, *God is Love*, “...within the community of believers there can never be room for a poverty that denies anyone what is needed for a dignified life” (no. 20).

One of the ways the Church lives out the theme of Option for the Poor and Vulnerable is through its own non-profit organizations that work to improve the lives of those living in need. Two examples of these non-profits include Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the Pontifical Mission Societies.

CRS is the official international humanitarian agency of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Started in 1943, its original goal was to help World War II survivors in Europe. It now provides education, agricultural support, healthcare, and microfinancing to more than 130 million people.

The Pontifical Mission Societies are a network of people dedicated to missionary activity under the direction of the Holy Father. They collect funds and provide resources for needs like catechetical training, church construction, and seminary education in dioceses who are unable to fund these ministries on their own. The Center for Mission is the official representative of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.



In this month’s video, we will learn more about the Option for the Poor and Vulnerable. As you watch the video, think about how you might help the non-profit organizations in your community.

Celebrating the Mystery

One of the ways Catholics are strengthened in living out their call to the poor and vulnerable is through the Sacrament of Matrimony. One of the two sacraments of service, the Sacrament of Matrimony helps those who are called to receive it work for justice, peace, and the dignity of all in their communities.

Our family is where we learn to live in relationship with one another. It provides a foundation so that we can build right relationships with those in our larger communities. It is where we learn to see the face of Christ in all whom we encounter, and to understand we are called to live as one. In this way, all can flourish and reach their life’s purpose.

Teaching Prayer: Intercession

The Catechism of the Catholic Church introduces us to five different forms of prayer: blessing or adoration, petition, intercession, thanksgiving and praise. When we remember the needs of the poor in prayer, this is called intercession: we are interceding for the needs of others. Can you write your own prayer of intercession on behalf of the poor, or for a non-profit organization in your community?

Why Catholics Care About People Living in Poverty: >>



- ✚ Can you think of any Catholic non-profits serving in your area? Are there ways you can support their work?
- ✚ How does the Option for the Poor and Vulnerable theme help strengthen our communities?

- ✚ Why is justice a necessary part of living out the theme of Option for the Poor and Vulnerable?