



"This Christmas,
let us recommit ourselves to truly
'sharing with the poor'
...not simply
'giving to those who are poor'."

Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB
Archbishop of Perth



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

On Sunday, 14 November 2021, as I launch my annual **Christmas Appeal for LifeLink** throughout the Archdiocese, Pope Francis will launch his fourth 'World Day of the Poor' around the world.



Pope Francis' message this year focuses on the verse:

"The poor you will always have with you" (Mk 14:7)

Pope Francis writes: *"Poverty is the result of people's selfishness; it is not fate or the fault of the poor. Unless we choose to become poor in passing riches, worldly power and vanity, we will never be able to give our lives in love; we will live a fragmented existence, full of good intentions, but ineffective for transforming the world."*

We need, therefore, to open ourselves decisively to the grace of Christ, which can make us witnesses of His boundless charity and restore credibility to our presence in the world. People must never become indifferent knowing there will always be poverty in the world and among their neighbours. Jesus always sides with the poor and He "shares their lot".

This is a powerful lesson for His disciples in every age, because it calls people to directly engage in 'a mutual sharing of life' with the poor, who are not 'outside our communities', but brothers and sisters whose sufferings we should share in an effort to alleviate their difficulties and marginalisation, restore their lost dignity and ensure their necessary social inclusion.

'Mutual sharing generates fraternity' that is enduring, it strengthens solidarity, and it lays the necessary foundations for achieving justice. Almsgiving, on the other hand, is only occasional and 'risks gratifying those who perform it and can prove demeaning for those who receive it'.

Christians must recognize all the different and 'excessive forms of moral and social disorder that are generating ever new forms of poverty'. Unfortunately, there is a growing notion that the poor are responsible for their condition, and they are 'an intolerable burden for an economic system focused on the interests of a few privileged groups'.

An economic system that picks and chooses from or completely ignores ethical principles and 'unscrupulous economic and financial actors lacking in a humanitarian sense and in social responsibility' are all contributing to creating inhumane conditions for people already in precarious situations.

Individualistic lifestyles are complicit in generating poverty, and often saddle the poor with responsibility for their condition. **"Yet poverty is not the result of fate; it is the result of selfishness"** which is why development and policies must value the abilities and participation of everyone, especially the poor."

Pope Francis concludes by saying: *"The World Day of the Poor should help local churches evangelise by meeting the poor personally wherever they may be."*

We cannot wait for the poor to knock on our door; we need urgently to reach them in their homes, in hospitals and nursing homes, on the streets and in the dark corners where they sometimes hide, in shelters and reception centres'.

It is important to understand how they feel, what they are experiencing and what their hearts desire," he said.



Auxiliary Bishop and Chair of LifeLink, Don Sproxtton, reflects on the words of Pope Francis, which are so relevant and important for us all as we consider those who are struggling right here at home in our community.

"The poor are not just the object for our giving. Sharing with the poor, not just giving: Solidarity with the poor. Relationship with the poor, not condescension. The poor are one with us.

We are all poor in some way. The poor can evangelise us. Christ is to be found in the call of the poor person. He is the poorest of the poor: He made himself this way. We are given a new way to see the face of the Father in the poor. The suffering of the poor, the poor materially and the poor rich, brings understanding of the suffering Christ.

The poor are not outsiders, but our brothers and our sisters. Listen, befriend, work together for change - mutual sharing is enduring, but giving of charity is occasional," said Bishop Don.



My annual Christmas Appeal for LifeLink is the only occasion I take each year to directly ask you - our parishes, parishioners and members of the Western Australian community - to help support the important work of the welfare and social service agencies in this Archdiocese.

More than 37,000 Western Australian families and individuals struggling in the community will reach out to our LifeLink agencies for help this year.

It is through your financial support for the work of our LifeLink agencies that you are afforded the very real and tangible opportunity to demonstrate your compassion, your understanding, your love and your solidarity, as a member of 'one Catholic family', for those who reach out to us.

It is by embracing the poor and being with the poor in experiencing their need that you will 'walk in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd' and see reflected in those you meet the face of Jesus.



As I officially launch my annual Christmas Appeal for LifeLink, I ask you to help raise a minimum of **\$650,000 for people in need throughout WA.** I am delighted to say that we achieved this figure last year, and I know that we can do so again.

Please give generously to my appeal.

May God bless you, your family and loved ones as we soon celebrate the birth of Jesus, the incarnation of our heavenly Father's mercy.

I wish you all a Happy and Holy Christmas.

Yours in Jesus Christ,

Timothy Costelloe SDB

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Please visit our website to make a secure credit card donation
www.LifeLink.com.au

LifeLink Office

Griver House, 249 Adelaide Tce, Perth WA 6000 Tel +61 8 6104 3636 Email lifelink@perthcatholic.org.au Website www.lifelink.com.au

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