



Resources for prayer, worship, public rallies, demonstrations, and vigils

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How to use this resource

This document contains several resources that you can use for prayer services, during Masses, and at public demonstrations, rallies, and vigils in your community. Feel free to adapt these resources as needed.

- [**Making room at the table**](#): This homily resource is for the 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time, September 25, 2022. It can be used for weekend Masses, intentional Eucharistic communities, or for a Sunday prayer service.
- [**Lazarus speaks: Voices of those with no place at the table**](#): This resource could be incorporated into prayer services, liturgies, or read at public rallies, demonstrations, and vigils.
- [**Penitential rite for misplaced priorities**](#): In addition to using these at Mass or prayer services, this resource can be used in public rallies, demonstrations, and vigils.
- [**Give Us Bread, Not Stones: Prayers for conversion and grace**](#): These prayers of petition can be used at any gathering.
- [**Tell me**](#): This poem can be incorporated into any prayer service or public event. Feel free to share it in your social media postings as well.
- [**Bread Not Stones Prayer**](#): This can be used at any prayer service or public event. It can also be shared on social media.
- [**St. Pope Paul VI quotes**](#): Our days of prayer and action are dedicated to the memory of St. Pope Paul VI, whose birthday is September 26. You can use these quotes in prayer services, public events, and in your social media postings.
- [**Quotes from Popes Francis and Benedict XVI**](#)

Making room at the table

Homily Resource: 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time, September 25, 2022

Today's Gospel reading includes the familiar parable about the rich man and Lazarus. What strikes us is the failure of the rich man to even acknowledge poor Lazarus who was lying at his door, which means the rich man passed by Lazarus every time he left or entered his home. (This makes the failure of the priest and the Levite passing by the beaten man on the road to Jericho pale in comparison.)

The rich man suffered from a willful moral blindness that rendered Lazarus invisible. It was not that he could not see Lazarus: he refused to see him. There were powerful social and religious beliefs that justified the rich man's attitude towards Lazarus. Some believed that poverty was due to the sins of the poor. They believed that poverty was God's curse on the ungodly. Paired with this rationalization was the belief that wealth was due to the blessing of God on those who were righteous. These rationalizations still exist today in one form or another and are still used to judge and condemn the poor.

Notice that even in hell the rich man still saw Lazarus as a lowly subordinate that he could order around as he pleased. "[H]e cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames'" (Luke 16:24).

The great chasm that Abraham described between Lazarus and the rich man was not just the distance between heaven and hell. It was a chasm created by the inability of the rich man – even in death – to see Lazarus as anything other than a member of the lowest caste – an untouchable.

In the first reading from the prophet Amos, we are warned against the sin of complacency that comes with the comforts of wealth and extravagance. There are those whose wealth, class, and race allow them to live their entire lives without ever encountering someone from a lower class – without ever knowing someone who lacks enough to eat or has no place to call home.

We live in economically and racially segregated communities that make it easy to be complacent about our poor neighbors, those who clean our office buildings, serve tables at our favorite restaurants, mow our lawns, keep our grocery stores stocked with food, and take care of the sick and elderly.

Complacency over the scourge of poverty can be seen in the priorities we set in our federal budgets. Money is lavished on weapon systems and nuclear weapons while money to make housing, food, education, and healthcare more affordable are treated as expensive extravagances.

On Monday we will be celebrating the birthday of St. Pope Paul VI. In his encyclical, *On the Development of Peoples*, he reminds us, "It is not just a question of eliminating hunger and reducing poverty. It is not just a question of fighting wretched conditions, though this is an urgent and necessary task... It involves building a human community where liberty is not an idle word, where the needy Lazarus can sit down with the rich man at the same banquet table."

Lazarus speaks: Voices of those with no place at the table

READER ONE: In his encyclical, *On the Development of Peoples*, St. Pope Paul VI reminds us, "It is not just a question of eliminating hunger and reducing poverty. It is not just a question of fighting wretched conditions, though this is an urgent and necessary task... It involves building a human community where liberty is not an idle word, where the needy Lazarus can sit down with the rich man at the same banquet table."

READER TWO: Listen now to the voices of those living in the richest nation in the world, who suffer the violence of poverty, hunger, homelessness, sickness, and our nation's addiction to guns.

VOICES OF THOSE SUFFERING THE VIOLENCE OF POVERTY:

READER ONE: Rev. William Barber, II, co-chair of the Poor People's Campaign stated, "This level of poverty and greed in this, the richest nation in the history of the world, constitutes a moral crisis and a fundamental failure of the policies of greed,"

READER TWO: "To me, poor is the burning mortification I felt when my fifth-grade crush, behind me in line at the grocery store, snickered as he witnessed my mom paying with food stamps. It's the oppressive cloak of sticky summer heat in our un-air conditioned one-room apartment, and how the hard, squeaky springs of the thrift store sofa bed I shared with my mom poked into my back no matter how I positioned myself."

VOICES OF THOSE WHO SUFFER THE VIOLENCE OF HOMELESSNESS

READER ONE: On a single night in 2020, more than 580,000 people across the country experienced homelessness. The amount of people experiencing homelessness in the United States has steadily increased over the last four years, but for the first time since the data collection began, the number of unsheltered families is up.

READER TWO: "If you've never been homeless, it's tough to describe that first night. The fear and disillusionment are almost paralyzing. You just go through the motions, but at the same time you're beating yourself up for being in this situation. I pretend it is not that bad to others... I am too embarrassed to let anyone know that I sleep in my car and have only one pair of pants left to wear. I used to have a good income. I used to go hiking and work full time and walk my dog and jog five days a week. I had what many people have in the United States, and I took it for granted that I would always have a home and a job and enough money to at least pay the bills and keep my clothes clean and eat healthy food."

VOICES OF THOSE SUFFERING THE VIOLENCE OF HOUSING INSECURITY

READER ONE: The national median rent was \$1,827 a month in April 2022, up 16.7 percent from a year ago. Rent has been steadily increasing since early last year. If recent trends continue, the report projects the typical rent could be more than \$2,000 a month by August 2022. Currently, one in four renters is behind on their rent due to job loss, furlough, or wage reductions.

READER TWO: "It means staying in an empty apartment with no electricity and an eviction notice on the door, because you know, there's a 30-day grace period, and if you don't figure something out by then, you'll be on the street. It's watching your own blood depart from your body as you give plasma for the second time in a week and already calculating when you'll be eligible to give again, because that's \$30."

VOICES OF THOSE WHO SUFFER THE VIOLENCE OF HUNGER

READER ONE: According to the U.S. Census Bureau data from March 2021, 18 million adults reported not having enough to eat in the last seven days. In white families with children, 11 percent go persistently hungry. In black families with children, 29 percent go hungry. Dr. Deborah Frank, M.D., a founder of Children's Health Watch points out, "By age five, children are old enough to understand the pressures parents are facing. They'll try to squash the younger sibling from asking for seconds because there isn't enough, or share their school lunches with parents," she said. "Parents try to protect the children and children try to protect their parents."

READER TWO: "Hunger is my least favorite word since about four years ago. It was a time when we didn't have enough to feed all of the kids and adults. After all the kids ate, my parents had to share a plate. I would eat no more than half my plate and give it to my younger brothers and sisters. Most nights, I went to bed hungry. My parents would cry because they felt like they had let us down. At school, I ate lots for breakfast and even lunch to be as full as possible, but I still was hungry at bedtime."

VOICES OF THOSE WHO SUFFER THE VIOLENCE OF HEALTHCARE

READER ONE: 45 percent of uninsured adults remained uninsured because the cost of coverage was too high in 2016. One in five uninsured adults in 2016 went without needed medical care due to cost.

READER TWO: "My mother lost her battle to metastatic breast cancer this year, due in part, to not being able to afford her medical bills. She held off being seen and treated sometimes due to the amount of money she owed or would have owed... When she died, she had thousands of dollars in medical bills. Nobody should lose their life because they can't pay medical bills."

VOICES OF THOSE WHO FACE GUN VIOLENCE

READER ONE: The United States is the only country on the entire planet with more guns (at least 400 million and counting) than people (335 million). The number of guns manufactured in the U.S. has nearly tripled over the past two decades, from 3.9 million in 2000 to 11.3 million in 2020. We endure more mass shootings than all other developed countries combined.

READER TWO: What haunts Highland Park, Illinois resident and anti-gun violence activist Dana Gordon is that days before the gun massacre that killed seven and injured 39 of her neighbors, she organized an anti-gun violence event prompted by the Uvalde gun massacre where the names of the 21 victims were read. Gordon found herself recalling the words of Kimberly Rubio, the mother of Uvalde victim Lexi Rubio, from her video testimony to Congress, "Somewhere out there, there is a mom listening to our testimony thinking, I can't even imagine their pain, not knowing that our reality will one day be hers unless we act now. And now here we are. Next time we will have to read the names of our own victims."

Penitential rite for misplaced priorities

Global military expenditures surpassed \$2 trillion for the first time ever last year, with the United States spending more on its war-making capacity than the next nine nations combined. At the same time, foreign assistance remains less than one percent of the federal budget. *Lord have mercy.*

LORD HAVE MERCY.

The U.S. has spent 7.5 times more money on nuclear weapons than on global COVID-19 vaccine donations, despite President Biden's pledge that the U.S. would become "the world arsenal of vaccines." *Christ have mercy.*

CHRIST HAVE MERCY.

Congress appropriated \$858 billion in defense spending, which was \$37 billion more than requested by the president. At the same time, the child tax credit, expanded by Congress in 2021, which reduced child poverty by more than 30 percent, was not renewed. *Lord have mercy.*

LORD HAVE MERCY.

Our new military budget would provide almost \$27 billion for Navy ship construction, \$4.1 billion more than was requested. It includes plans for 29 transport planes for \$3.1 billion; 20 more than requested. Appropriators also found \$900 million to buy a dozen fighter jets that the administration did not formally request. At the same time, four in 10 low-income people in the U.S. experience homelessness or spend over half their income on rent. Most don't receive federal rental assistance due to limited funding. *Christ have mercy.*

CHRIST HAVE MERCY.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and give us the grace to act for social justice in pursuit of peace. Amen.

Give Us Bread, Not Stones: Prayers for conversion and grace

LEADER: Jesus tells us that if we had the faith of a mustard seed, we could move mountains (Matthew 17:20). Today, we come before God realizing that the mountain that needs to be moved is us. We do not petition God to do things for us; we pray that God empowers us to act as we are called to do.

READER ONE: **Source of Our Salvation**, give us the courage to reject the idols of guns and bombs; that falsely promise salvation and safety, but only bring death and destruction: we pray...

ALL: Give us bread, not stones.

READER TWO: **Creator of the Cosmos**, you made us stewards of this garden called Earth, to care for every creature and protect all the elements of water, earth, and sky that make life possible. Help us to reject the notion that we are separate from creation and give us the wisdom and will to nurture all life: we pray...

ALL: Give us bread, not stones.

READER ONE: **Mother of All Humanity**, you made us different sizes, colors, genders, and ethnicities that we might learn to love and celebrate your divinity in our diversity. Give us the clarity of perception, to see one another as sisters and brothers. Give us an unwavering conviction to protect and love one another. We pray...

ALL: Give us bread, not stones.

READER TWO: **God of Plenty**, you created a world of abundance and instructed us to share the riches of this world with one another – from each in accordance to their ability, to each in accordance to their need. Give us your spirit of justice, that we may never grow tired in our efforts to protect the dignity of all, we pray...

ALL: Give us bread, not stones.

READER ONE: **Healer of All the Nations**, your son came to heal the body and soul of all who suffer; without cost and without favor. Grant us the virtue of compassion for all those in need of healthcare, and give us the persistence to continue the work of making healing available to all, we pray...

ALL: Give us bread, not stones.

Tell me

Tell me;

what is national security

to a family hounded by debt collectors

because they cannot pay their medical bills;

or to an elderly woman who is afraid to go to a doctor

because she knows she cannot afford it;

or to the diabetic on insulin who must skip injections

until he gets his next paycheck?

Please tell me;

what is national security

to the mother facing a 30-day late rent notice taped to her front door;

who feels the walls closing in around her;

whose shrinking horizon is limited to surviving the day,

as she scrambles to find food for her children's next meal?

Can anyone tell me;

what is national security

to a child experiencing homelessness who is forced to go to school in dirty clothes,

who is teased because she smells,

and never has the required school supplies;

or to the LGBTQ+ child who gets shoved into lockers;

is verbally assaulted by other students

and whose complaints are dismissed because he is "so open about it"?

Won't someone please tell me;

what is national security

to a child hiding under his school desk during an active-shooter drill;

or to a family who never look out their front window

for fear of being killed by a stray bullet;

or to a young black man pulled over by the police

who wonders, "Is this how I am going to die?"

Bread Not Stones Prayer

God of Liberation from all our foreboding;
Our children ask for bread but are fed the poison of fear.
We put guns in their hands and tell them;
this is the way to safety, power, respect, and salvation.

We give lip service to your call to love without cost
and to show compassion without distinctions;
but we are quick to abandon your teachings
when we are told to fear and despise those who are not like us.

We have abandoned your promise of abundant life
in exchange for the promise of longevity through overwhelming firepower.

Give us the wisdom to embrace the things that make for peace.
Help us to understand that we live in a world of endless wonder
that needs to be cared for and treasured.

Help us to see that we live in a world of bounty
that belongs to the whole human family,
without excluding or favoring anyone;
from each, according to their ability.
and to each, according to their needs.

Help us understand that our security lies
in the strength of our solidarity with all
– even those who are marked as enemies.

Open our eyes, hearts, and minds to the truth
that we are only safe and secure when everyone is safe and secure;
that we will be at peace only when justice rolls on like a river,
protecting the dignity of every person and embracing every creature.

Show us how to give our children the bread they need. Amen.

St. Pope Paul VI quotes

St. Pope Paul VI was born Giovanni Battista Enrico Antonio Maria Montini, on September 26, 1897. He served as pope from June 21, 1963 until his death in 1978. Succeeding Pope John XXIII, he continued the Second Vatican Council, which he closed in 1965, implementing its numerous reforms. He fostered improved ecumenical relations with Eastern Orthodox and Protestant churches, which resulted in many historic meetings and agreements.

His major contribution to Catholic Social Teaching was making the link between peace and the social development of people who are poor and marginalized in his 1967 encyclical, "On the Development of Peoples." He also coined the phrase, "If you want peace, work for justice."

Pope Francis beatified him on October 19, 2014. His liturgical feast was celebrated on the date of his birth on September 26 until 2019 when it was changed to the date of his ordination on May 29. Pope Francis canonized Paul VI on October 14, 2018.

"There are the flagrant inequalities not merely in the enjoyment of possessions, but even more in the exercise of power. In certain regions a privileged minority enjoys the refinements of life, while the rest of their inhabitants, impoverished and disunited, "are deprived of almost all possibility of acting on their own initiative and responsibility, and often subsist in living and working conditions unworthy of the human person." (On the Development of Peoples)

"Now if the earth truly was created to provide humanity with the necessities of life and the tools for their own progress, it follows that everyone has the right to glean what they need from the earth. The recent Council reiterated this truth: "God intended the earth and everything in it for the use of all human beings and peoples. Thus, under the leadership of justice and in the company of charity, created goods should flow fairly to all." All other rights, whatever they may be, including the rights of property and free trade, are to be subordinated to this principle." (On the Development of Peoples)

"No one is allowed to set aside solely for their own advantage, possessions which exceed their needs when others lack the necessity of life." (On the Development of Peoples)

"For when entire populations, deprived of the necessities of life, are so subjected to the domination of others that they are denied any self-initiated activity, responsibility, attainment of higher culture, and participation in social and public life, they are easily tempted to remove by force, the injustice done to human dignity." (On the Development of Peoples)

"It is not just a question of eliminating hunger and reducing poverty. It is not just a question of fighting wretched conditions, though this is an urgent and necessary task. It involves building a human community where men can live truly human lives, free from discrimination on account of race, religion or nationality, free from servitude to others or to natural forces which they cannot yet control satisfactorily. It involves

building a human community where liberty is not an idle word, where the needy Lazarus can sit down with the rich man at the same banquet table.” (On the Development of Peoples)

“We asked world leaders to set aside part of their military expenditures for a world fund to relieve the needs of impoverished peoples. What is true for the immediate war against poverty is also true for the work of national development. Only a concerted effort on the part of all nations, embodied in and carried out by this world fund, will stop these senseless rivalries and promote fruitful, friendly dialogue between nations.” (On the Development of Peoples)

“Countless millions are starving, countless families are destitute, countless men are steeped in ignorance; countless people need schools, hospitals, and homes worthy of the name. In such circumstances, we cannot tolerate public and private expenditures of a wasteful nature; we cannot but condemn lavish displays of wealth by nations or individuals; we cannot approve a debilitating arms race. It is Our solemn duty to speak out against them. If only world leaders would listen to Us, before it is too late!” (On the Development of Peoples)

“No one is permitted to disregard the plight of his brothers living in dire poverty, enmeshed in ignorance and tormented by insecurity. The Christian, moved by this sad state of affairs, should echo the words of Christ: ‘I have compassion on the crowd.’” (On the Development of Peoples)

“Extreme disparity between nations in economic, social, and educational levels provokes jealousy and discord, often putting peace in jeopardy. ... For peace is not simply the absence of warfare, based on a precarious balance of power; it is fashioned by efforts directed day after day toward the establishment of the ordered universe willed by God, with a more perfect form of justice among men.” (On the Development of Peoples)

“As you know very well, peace is not built merely by means of politics and a balance of power and interests. It is built with the mind, with ideas, with the works of peace. ... If you want to be brothers, let the arms fall from your hands. A person cannot love with offensive weapons in his hands. Arms, and especially the terrible arms that modern science has provided you, engender bad dreams, feed evil sentiments, create nightmares, hostilities, and dark resolutions even before they cause any victims and ruins. They call for enormous expenses. They interrupt projects of solidarity and of useful labor. They warp the outlook of nations.” (Address to the United Nations, October 4, 1965)

“Peace resounds as an invitation to practice Justice: "Justice will bring about Peace" (Cf: Is 32:17). We repeat this today in a more incisive and dynamic formula: 'If you want Peace, work for Justice'" (World Day of Peace Message, January 1, 1972).

Quotes from Popes Francis and Benedict XVI

“Peace is indivisible, and to be truly just and lasting, it has to be universal. It is deceptive and self-defeating reasoning to think that the security and peace of some is disconnected from the collective security and peace of others. This is also one of the lessons that the Covid-19 pandemic has tragically demonstrated. The security of our own future depends on guaranteeing the peaceful security of others, for if peace, security and stability are not established globally, they will not be enjoyed at all. Individually and collectively, we are responsible for the present and future well-being of our brothers and sisters”

Pope Francis, Message to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, June 21, 2022

“Nuclear weapons are a costly and dangerous liability. They represent a “risk multiplier” that provides only an illusion of a “peace of sorts”. Here, I wish to reaffirm that the use of nuclear weapons, as well as their mere possession, is immoral. Trying to defend and ensure stability and peace through a false sense of security and a “balance of terror”, sustained by a mentality of fear and mistrust inevitably ends up poisoning relationships between peoples and obstructing any possible form of real dialogue. Possession leads easily to threats of their use, becoming a sort of “blackmail” that should be repugnant to the consciences of humanity.”

Pope Francis, Message to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, June 21, 2022

“The arms race, including nuclear weapons, continues to squander precious resources that could better be used to benefit the integral development of peoples and protect the natural environment. #NuclearDisarmament” - Pope Francis Twitter feed

“The pandemic is still spreading, while the social and economic crisis remains severe, especially for the poor. Nonetheless – and this is scandalous – armed conflicts have not ended and military arsenals are being strengthened. That is today’s scandal. ... There are still too many wars and too much violence in the world! May the Lord, who is our peace, help us to overcome the mindset of war.”

Pope Francis, Urbi et Orbi Message, Easter, April 4, 2021

“The message I would like to draw from this today is the following: to achieve peace it is necessary to be engaged, putting violence and weapons aside, to commit oneself with personal and community conversion, through dialogue and the patient search for possible agreement.”

Pope Benedict XVI, Concert by the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, July 11, 2012

“Of course, we have no political influence and we do not want any political power. But we do want to appeal to all Christians and to all those who feel touched by the words of the Holy See, to help mobilize all the forces that recognize how war is the worst solution for all sides. It brings no good to anyone, not even to the apparent victors. We understand this very well in Europe, after the two world wars. Everyone needs peace.”

Pope Benedict XVI September 9-14, 2006 In preparation for his trip to Bavaria

“I was embarrassed when I read that a group of states have committed to spending two percent...of GDP in acquiring weapons as a response to what is happening now. Madness.”

Pope Francis, March 24, 2022 in response to the war in Ukraine

“The arms race wastes precious resources that could be better used to benefit the integral development of peoples and to protect the natural environment. . . . [It is] an affront crying out to heaven.”

Pope Francis, November 24, 2019, address in Nagasaki