

Day 7

NOVENA
TO
ST IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA
VIDYANIKETAN

South Indian Common Juniorate

St. Xavier's College

Thiruvananthapuram

Kerala

Walking with the Excluded

UNIVERSAL APOSTOLIC PREFERENCES



Jeffrey Martin SJ

Day 7

Walking with the Excluded

Opening prayer

Father of my very soul, always caring and solicitous of me, I revere you with all my heart and I humbly pray you as though I had you here present before me, to commend me earnestly and much to God our lord, that he may grant me light clearly to know his most holy will, and grace to fulfil it perfectly. And the same petition I make to all of our society, especially those I have known here on earth and are now with you in heaven. Amen

Introduction

On the eighth day of the novena, let us ponder over the second Universal Apostolic Preferences in the light of the life of St Ignatius' vision and mission. Ignatius' vision of helping the poor is fulfilled through the second UAP. From his life experience, we can see St Ignatius as a person of *Cura Personalis*, especially for the poor and marginalized. In today's novena let us reflect on the struggles and sufferings of our target people, who are oppressed in the name of religion, race, ethnicity and caste. Walking with the excluded means walking with Jesus who says in the Gospel: You gave me to drink when I was thirsty, you fed me when I was hungry and you clothed me when I was naked. Whatsoever you do to do the least of my people, you do unto me." It's a divine task indeed for all the Jesuits across the world to accompany the poor, strengthen the marginalized, offer hope to the hopeless and voice out for the voiceless. The best example for us in our time is Fr Stan Swamy who stood with the people and fought for their rights. Let us imbibe the spirit of Fr Stan Swamy to stand for justice.

Hymn: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rn9-UNer6MQ> (In Christ Alone My Hope Is Found)

Reading: Matthew 25:37- 41

Reflection

Ignatian Insight

"Be generous to the poor orphans and those in need. Seeing God in all things means seeing God in the suffering of the poor, accompanying in their struggles, fighting for their rights."

Our first fathers started their ministry in order to find God in everything and save souls. In the Gospel reading, it is clear how the righteous found the Lord in service to the little ones, similarly, the founding fathers were ignited by the inspiration of the Eternal King to serve the suffering humanity. Today in this modern consumeristic world, the poor and needy are neglected, their rights are violated; their voices are suppressed. It is our mission to not only help the poor but empower them to stand on their own. Let us rely on God's providence as our Founder has said in the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus (Const VI 2,2). *"The Society, relying on God our Lord whom it serves with the aid of his divine grace, should trust that without having fixed revenue he will cause everything to be provided which is expedient for his greater praise and glory (Const VI 2,2)"*.

Pope Francis said very authentically, "How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure but it is news when the stock market loses two points?"

Pope Francis said, "Church teaching on giving priority to the well-being of the poor and marginalized is not a political or an ideological choice; it lies at the very heart of the Gospel. Jesus "stood among the sick, the poor, the excluded, showing them God's merciful love. The preferential option for the poor is a duty for all Christians and communities and it means doing more than providing needed assistance; it requires remedying the root causes and problems that lead to the need for aid. The preferential option for the poor, which includes feeding the hungry and drawing close to the excluded, "is the key criterion of Christian authenticity." He stated these on August 19, 2020 during his weekly general audience.

Let us Reflect...

1. What have I done for the excluded? What am I doing for the excluded? And what should I do for the excluded?
2. Following the best example of Jesus who stood by the poor and oppressed, in what way do I show my solidarity?
3. In what way do the struggles and sufferings of the oppressed affect me personally?
4. Theologian Karl Barth said about the Bible on one hand and newspaper on the other hand, am I able to assimilate my prayer and social action?
5. Am I a comfort-seeking person least bothered about the happenings around me?

Pause...

and

Ponder....

Petitions

Our Response: Lord, give me the strength to walk with the Excluded

1. Ever-loving Father, as we grow in the love of your Son in the path of St. Ignatius, help us become aware of the struggles and sufferings of the poor. Grant us the grace like our father Ignatius and the his first companions, we may fervently work for betterment of the poor and marginalized. For this intention, let us pray.
2. Gracious Lord, various forms of discrimination and oppression have aggravated the plight of the poor and the oppressed all over the world. Help us become more relevant to the happenings and respond courageously to the need of the hour so that we may not be just silent spectators or bystanders but beacons of hope to voice out for equality, dignity, justice and harmony as Fr Stan Swamy. For this intention, let us pray.
3. God of salvation, we pray for all the Jesuits and partners who are involved in social action. As they are directly involved in the struggles and sufferings of the oppressed, Lord, give them ample strength and courage and lead them in the light of your wisdom so that they may dedicate themselves truthfully to the empowerment of the people. For this intention, let us pray.
4. God of justice, we pray for all our political leaders, especially the ruling men of India. Lord, enlighten them with your knowledge and wisdom and inspire them with the grace of understanding that they may work for the unity of the people not for division; that they may work for the poor and the excluded not for the rich and creamy layers; that they may work for social justice and harmony not for instigating violence among the people in the name of caste, race, ethnicity or religion. They may become instruments of peace. For this intention, let us pray.

Concluding prayer: O God, for the greater glory of your name you chose Ignatius to be your servant, to do battle for Christ and the Church under the banner of the cross. Grant to us who have received this grace of being his sons in the society that bears your Son's name, that through the help and example of our

father, we may fight on earth for the defense and spread of faith, so that your name be glorified and your people may be saved. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen