

A MISSION OF
COMPASSION



Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network



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DEAR FRIENDS IN THE LORD

The Way of the Heart is the spiritual itinerary proposed by the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network. It is the compass for our mission, a mission of compassion for the world. The Way of the Heart is part of the process initiated by Pope Francis with *Evangelii Gaudium*, "The Joy of the Gospel".

The Way of the Heart was the result of several years of international work led by Father Claudio Barriga, S.J. Like any international document, it is a group effort, which has taken into account diverse cultures, languages, ecclesial and spiritual experiences. It has its richness and its limits. We presented this itinerary to Pope Francis in a document entitled: "A pathway with Jesus, in apostolic readiness" (December 2014). It presented a new way of understanding the mission of the Apostleship of Prayer, in a dynamic of apostolic availability. The Holy Father approved it in August 2014.

The Way of the Heart is essential for the recreation of this ecclesial service as the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network. It is a deepening of the spiritual tradition of the Apostleship of Prayer for today, and articulates in an original way essential elements of this spiritual treasure with the dynamics of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is the key to the interpretation of our mission, our compass. That is why in 2017 I proposed a commentary. The idea was to help the national teams of the Pope's Prayer Network to deepen each step and enter into its inner dynamics, so that they could propose, with their own creativity, materials that would help to enter into The Way of the Heart. We call this text the "Internal dynamics of the path".

However, few teams began to create new materials and proposals with The Way of the Heart, and we quickly realized that without them, progress in the recreation process of this pontifical work would be very slow. We started in 2018, with an international team, to write 11 books. This team was led by Bettina Raed, regional director of the Pope's Prayer Network in Argentina-Uruguay. It is from the land of Pope Francis, with the support of several Jesuit companions, that this work was coordinated. I am particularly grateful to Bettina for all her availability, her writing and coordination work.

I hope that these materials will help us to propose this mission of compassion to the world with creativity (spiritual retreats, formation sessions, meetings on the first Friday of the month, etc.). This is the basis of our mission. ***The Way of the Heart helps to enter into the spiritual dynamic of recreation, the dynamic of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.***

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International Director
Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network Original Spanish
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A MISSION OF
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STEP 8
BOOK 10

Outline to guide the step

Keyword: MISSION.

Objective: To collaborate with Jesus in his mission.

Attitudinal keys: : Openness to an encounter with the other.

What you want to obtain – Fruit: : Compassion for the world and docility to the Holy Spirit.

Inner dynamics for the step: Feel compassion – Get out of yourself to meet the brother/sister – Towards a culture of encounter.

Referential Framework

God, the Father of Jesus, and our Father, wants to make present His compassion in the world in and through us His disciples. We are invited to focus our gaze on humanity and to act with the feelings of the Heart of Jesus.

Even if we find ourselves limited by illness or physically restricted, even when we feel unable to change the unjust structures of our society, we participate in this mission making ours God's compassionate look toward all our brothers and sisters. We are sent with the Son, in diverse ways, to the peripheries of human existence, where people suffer injustice, to help sustain and heal those with a wounded heart.

Since we ourselves have benefited from God's compassion, we can give it to others. It is our response to His love for us (reparation). Let us go beyond the visible frontiers of the Church, for where compassion exists, there is the Spirit of God. We unite ourselves spiritually with all those who in different cultures or religious traditions are docile to this Spirit and are mobilized to alleviate the suffering of the weakest.

Internal dynamics of the Step

In the Spiritual Exercises, Saint Ignatius invites us to contemplate God (the Trinity), who looks at the world, and to save humanity He decides to incarnate Himself. ***"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but have eternal life."*** (John 3:16-17). God's decision, which finds its origin in His deep love for humanity, awaits our own decision.

As Pope Francis says: "... From the heart of the Trinity, from the depths of the mystery of God, the great river of mercy wells up and overflows unceasingly. It is a spring that will never run dry, no matter how many people draw from it. Every time someone is in need, he or she can approach it, because the mercy of God never ends. The profundity of the mystery surrounding it is as inexhaustible as the richness which springs up from it."
(Misericordiae Vultus, No. 25)

The words "compassion" and "mercy", which are found in the Bible, reflect a Greek term meaning that we feel the suffering of others and are internally pushed, out of love, to act on their behalf. It is a movement that comes from within, from our "guts" so to speak, from the "mother's womb," from the "heart". That is what we see in Jesus. We are often told that He has compassion at the sight of the crowd, for the sick, the blind and lepers, the man possessed in the country of the Gadarenes, or the widow of Naím who lost her only child. Jesus has this incredible capacity to be deeply moved by others, and what He feels internally becomes a decision, it mobilizes Him until it leads Him to action. What Jesus lives by is also what He teaches, the parable of the Good Samaritan is significant in this sense: ***"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy"*** (Matthew 5:7).

In the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, we are invited to a mission of compassion for the world, praying and mobilizing ourselves to meet the challenges facing humanity and the mission of the Church. This requires our consenting to become vulnerable, allowing ourselves to be deeply moved by how our brothers and sisters live throughout the world. This means dropping our "shields" and tearing down our "walls" to get out of our indifference and enter into a "culture of encounter." It is because we are totally united to the Heart of Jesus that we can, with Him, open ourselves in confidence. Because we have had the experience of being loved and forgiven, and we have experienced the Lord's deep mercy for us, is why we can at the same time become missionaries of mercy, witnesses of the Joy of the Gospel.



A VIEW FROM
THE BIBLICAL
PERSPECTIVE



A view from the Biblical perspective

To see with new eyes.

Surely, we have experienced sometimes how significant a look can be: looking and being looked at is a human experience that shapes us in our development. There are looks that inspire us, others that instill fear in us, there are looks that do not tell us anything and that go unnoticed, other looks with which we feel chosen. The look can be a channel through which we express our feelings and let us reveal our thoughts, but also the way we look says a lot about us and our inner world. A look can express tenderness, hatred, fear, anguish, need, sadness. The look is a way of linking us, of speaking without words of entering in dialogue with another person.

Going through the pages of the Bible, we find numerous stories in which someone's gaze is a key element in what happens there. There are many images of encounters, closeness, conversations in which, if we stopped to imagine what could be happening there, we would notice that the glances that were exchanged there defined the situation.

In the Old Testament, the stories tell us of a God who looks and chooses, God has for those He loves a look of choice, that He chooses, that He loves and in that love He creates. The look of God makes those who are looked at feel as exclusive to that God who looks at them. The account of creation brings us an expression at the end of each stage: **"And he saw God who was good"** (Genesis 1:21).

The songs of the Servant in Isaiah say, **"Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one, whom I prefer"**. (Isaiah 42:1). **"You are valuable in my eyes"** (Isaiah 43:4). And in response to that look of love and, in the face of the difficulties, "the gazes of God", they invoke supplicants from His gaze of compassion and love. **"Look upon me, answer me, LORD, my God! Give light to my eyes lest I sleep in death"** (Psalm 13:4).

Jesus marked with His gaze many encounters, situations that expressly speak of his gaze towards the people and others in which if we stop at the scene, we can imagine how His gaze would have accompanied the gestures He had at that time. **"Then Jesus looked at them indignantly, though saddened by the hardness of their hearts"** (Mark 3:5). **"As he passed by he saw Levi of Alpheus seated by the tax collection table"** (Mark 2:14). **"Walking by Lake Galilee he saw Simon and his brother Andrew who cast a net into the water because they were fishermen."** (Mark 1:16) **"When Jesus saw his faith, he said to the paralytic" (Mark 2:5). "Jesus looked at him with affection and said to him."** (Mark 10:21).



Jesus is in the world the face of the Father; we can well imagine that the eyes with which He looked at is the Father's gaze on the world. Thus, Saint Ignatius in his Spiritual Exercises recreates "the gaze" of the Trinity on the world inviting the exercitant to enter the scene and contemplate, look, and let himself be looked at with the gaze of the Trinity. *"Contemplate how the three divine persons looked at the flatness and roundness of the world. [...] The first point is to see the people, one and the other; and those on the surface of the earth, in so much diversity, both in costumes and in gestures: some white and others black, some at peace and others at war, some crying and others laughing, some healthy, others sick, some being born and others dying, etc."* (Saint Ignatius, *The Spiritual Exercises* 102, 106).

And it is that gaze of compassion of the Trinity for the created world that drives the Trinitarian heart the sending of the Son, and it will continue to be that look now incarnated in the historical Jesus who walks the streets of towns and and villages of ancient Galilee, healing, curing, rebuilding lives, making history the mission of compassion of Jesus. ***"They scurried about the surrounding country and began to bring in the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. Whatever villages or towns or countryside he entered, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and begged him that they might touch only the tassel on his cloak; and as many as touched it were healed"*** (Mark 6:55-56).

And it will be his intimate friends, his disciples, who will recognize, after the death of Jesus, the Presence of the Risen One, and with it the continuity of Jesus' mission now in his own stories. Thus Mary Magdalene is found by Jesus and sent ahead by her Master: ***"Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni,' which means Teacher. Jesus said to her, 'Stop holding on to me for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, "I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'"***" (John 20:16-17)

These encounters with the Risen One will define their lives forever; since from it they will forge a new look, which will nudge them into the ministry of compassion. A renewed look that will lead to a rereading of their stories and their lives shared with Jesus, born from the Presence that will be revealed to them after the Resurrection. Their lives will take on new meaning and they will be able to "remember" in their hearts the intimacy with Jesus and so drawing from the strength and joy of His Consoling Presence.

The disciples of Emmaus, found by Jesus on the road, are transformed from their vital experience to a rereading of their stories that Jesus Himself does with them: ***"Did not we feel our hearts burning as He spoke to us along the way and explained***



Scripture to us?" (Luke 24:32). Thus, the sending to the world of the Son in the person of Jesus by the Father is, for those who shared the historical time with Him, an event that acquires its real essence and depth from the perspective of the encounter with the Risen Jesus and the experience of His ministry of compassion. In Tiberias, the Apostle John will recognize him in the abundance of fish: ***"He is the Lord"*** (John 21:7). And a new vision will sprout in them experiencing the Promise of Salvation of God for all, from the beginning of Creation, and which will prompt them to continue in their lives the same mission of Jesus. Now it will be your collaboration, your hands and your feet that will continue to restore lives in Jesus' mission of compassion for the world, the ministry of compassion.

In the same way as His disciples, today Jesus invites us to look at the world with His eyes, so that we get infected by His look and forge that look of disciples committed with the world that God loves so much. A vision in tune with His heart and his mission of compassion, and that makes us meet our brothers. Jesus Christ wants to need us, He chooses to count on each of his disciples, with you, with me, with all those who most want to commit His mission. And He invites us to collaborate with Him, with His style, in His way, so that today your feet and mine will travel the world, your hands, and mine that will work with Him for those who suffer and need consolation. What would you say to this Great Lord who asks you today, "Will you come with me?"

- The Lord has sent me to bind up broken hearts. ***"The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me because the LORD has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the afflicted, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, release to the prisoners"*** (Isaiah 61:1).
- If you see a poor man, do not turn your face, and God will not turn away take His face away from you. ***"Give alms from your possessions. Do not turn your face away from any of the poor, so that God's face will not be turned away from you..."*** (Psalm 130:1).
- "Have among yourselves the same sentiments of the Heart of Jesus, ***"Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus,"*** (Philippians 2:5).
- Jesus had compassion for the man suffering from leprosy, touched him with His hand, and said, "I want, it is clean" ***"Moved with pity, He stretched out His hand, touched him, and said to him, 'I do will it. Be made clean,'"*** (Mark 1:41).
- ***The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for He has consecrated me to bring good news to the poor, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord,"*** (Luke 4:18-19).



- *"...Contemplate how the three divine persons looked at the entire plain or the roundness of the whole world. [...] The first point is to see the people, one and the other; and first those on the face of the earth, in so much diversity, both in costumes as in gestures: some white and others black, some at peace and others at war, some crying and others laughing, some healthy, others sick, some being born and others dying, etc." (Saint Ignatius, The Spiritual Exercises No. 102, 106)*

A biblical view with the eyes of compassion

"What do I have to do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the law?" "What do you read in it?" "Who is my neighbor?" The Gospel of Luke brings us a story in which these questions revolve around a dialogue between Jesus and a lawyer. And the Lord begins to narrate...: ***"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, he fell into the hands of some bandits who stripped him naked, beat him to a pulp, leaving him half dead"*** (Luke 10:25-37).

Here is the full narrative of the story:

There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" He said in reply, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." He replied to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live." But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise, a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds, and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.' Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?" He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." (Luke 10:25-37)

And that parable, that interpretation of the account comes out of the Lord's deep feelings, out of His heart, since he walked the streets very attentive to the beggars,



those in desperate need that He saw lying on the sides of the roads.

And this time Jesus tells us that this man, who has no name, Jesus only says of him that he was a "man," came down from Jerusalem to Jericho, certainly a dangerous road, nothing easy to do at that time. And this man must have known and yet he decides to "to go down that way," at his own risk. And he has found what was to be expected, that that unseen danger was concretized in a real assault. Outlaws robbed him and left him half dead. We could say that he asked for it or that he should have foreseen it. As we so often think of the people we know who make risky decisions and suffer the negative consequences for them. And there is this man lying, helpless and needy.

And so, along that same road a priest passes and then a Levite. Very well-known persons in those times, religious and well-educated men, occupied with their piety and worship of God. However, these men by "doing a detour", we could say, "dodging the bulge" they continue on their way. They look the other way, close their hearts, and do not see or "do not want to see" the unfortunate man lying down and in need of help. It can also be a great temptation for us, if we are close to the world of the sacred, to live far from the real world where our brothers fight, work and suffer, to stay remain comfortable in our devotional spaces far from reality. Sick of an intimate spirituality enclosed in the walls of the temples. Many other times many of us pass by following our path, stuck with "our issues" without even being noticing if anyone needs us.

In the story told by Jesus for those who followed Him, it will not be the men of worship who can best tell us how to treat those who suffer, but the people who have a merciful heart. It is not worship that is the key, but love. For along the way a Samaritan approaches. He clearly is not coming from the temple. He does not belong to the chosen people of Israel. He is also not a valuable person in the eyes of those who were listening to Jesus at the time. He rather an unloved character, from whom nothing good could be expected. The Samaritans were at odds with the Jews as they accused the former of not being faithful to the God of Israel and instead they were worshipping other gods.

However, this Samaritan did stop, paid attention to the man lying on the road and assisted him. Let us pay attention to some details in the story. What has moved this Samaritan to stop his journey? Only mercy and compassion, because this unknown and half-dead man would not be able to repay any gesture this Samaritan did for him. Mercy is the only truly human reaction to the suffering of the other. The mercy of the Samaritan humanizes, the indifference of the Levite and the priest in the story



dehumanizes. Compassion is the radical attitude of love that must inspire the actions of the human person in the face of the suffering of others.

This Samaritan "sees it", that is, he is not distracted, he is attentive, he pays attention and realizes what the other two ignored. He also stops and assists the fallen, heals his wounds with oil and wine. It is that compassion, not a feeling, but a principle of action, a principle that moves us to act. How? Let us look at the Samaritan:

1. He sees, he is aware of those who suffers.
2. He stops, and wastes time with the one lying down.
3. He goes out of his way and leaves the path he had planned.
4. He gives what the other needs, he invests his time, money, and to relieve the suffering of other.

Oil and wine are not minor items. The Samaritan shares what he has with those who need it, his gestures are like a balm, they are concrete and gentle act of compassion represented in the story of the oil. And this action restores and rebuilds the person's life, puts it back on track and start again, restores the joy of living, the ability to celebrate and enjoy life, symbolized by the wine poured on the wounds.

And so, the Samaritan takes care of the man, takes charge and places him on his mount. He takes him to the inn so that they can continue to help him there. The inn is a place of welcome, with open doors and a welcome for those who arrive wounded like this man. A symbol of our hearts, our lives, of our communities and of the Church itself which must be "open doors" to welcome and receive those lives have been left lying on the road. Thus "the inns" must:

1. Open doors and receive
2. Make room
3. Take care of the guests
4. Help them to go back on their journey

This story can help us let ourselves be questioned. Who is the Samaritan? But the same Jesus who shows us his style, his way of proceeding, the core of the mission that the Father has entrusted to him. Compassion is the face of the Father and the principle that shapes the whole life, mission, and destiny of Jesus.

Believing in Jesus is not believing a doctrine or a set of good precepts; it is following a person who, with his actions, asks us: What do you do? Who do you love? What do you do concretely for the people who suffer in the world, those who are close and not so close to us?

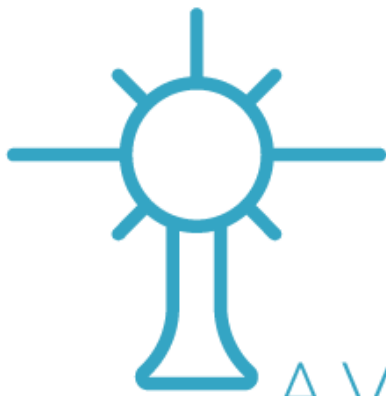


This is where our following and the conversion of our hearts leads, making us available to the mission of compassion that Jesus inaugurated and symbolized in this story. We have to get closer to the people we meet in our life to offer them our fraternal friendship and our help in solidarity. We have to embody a "practical" love for our brothers and sisters.

That is why Jesus will tell us: "Go and do the same". Which is equivalent to telling us, you go and do with others what you have experienced. Who feels loved and saved does not he can if not love and seek relief for his brothers.

That is why Jesus will tell us: "Go and do the same" which is equivalent to telling us to go and do with others what you have experienced. Those who feel loved and saved cannot if he does not love and seek relief for his brothers and sisters.

This story is an invitation to go through the words of Jesus with our hearts, to feel saved by Him, the Good Samaritan, when we have been thrown by life on the roadsides, To realize our detours and blindness so as not to see the needs of others. And to experience Jesus the Good Samaritan who saves us, He soothes the wounds with oil and restores our joy with the new wine of His love. In order finally for us Church to become an inn that welcomes, that receives, that cares for and that returns to the path that Jesus is putting in our lives.



A VIEW FROM
THE PERSPECTIVE
OF FAITH.

A view from the perspective of Faith

The church is missionary

The idea and the mission experience opens us up to exploration and accuracy of some questions: What is the mission about? Who sends it? In what way? To whom? And it seems convenient at the beginning of this dive into the vast world of mission to dwell on some words of Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*, which can illuminate the subject:

The Church's missionary transformation

Evangelization obeys the missionary mandate of Jesus: ***“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you”*** (Mt 28:19-20). These verses present the moment in which the Risen One sends His followers to preach the Gospel at all times and everywhere, so that faith in Him spreads to every corner of the earth and the presence of the Kingdom be established.

A Church which goes forth

In the Word of God, this dynamism of “exit” appears constantly that God wants to challenge believers. Abraham accepted the call to set out for a new land (cf. Gen 12:1-3). Moses heard God's call: ***“Go, I send you”*** (Ex 3:10) and led the people towards the promised land (cf. Ex 3:17). To Jeremiah He says: ***“To all whom I send you, you shall go”*** (Jer 1:7). Today in this “Go” of Jesus, there are ever new scenarios and challenges to the Church's mission of evangelization, and we are all called to this new missionary “send-off”. Every Christian and each community will discern which the path is that the Lord asks of them, but we are all invited to accept this call: get out from your own comfort zone and dare to reach all the *“peripheries” that need the light of the Gospel.* (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 19-20).

We say that the Church is missionary, that her essence is mission, the departure, and exodus. There is no Church for itself, nor for sustaining itself but Church by and for others. The Church as a community of believers is not the sum of those who have believed in Jesus on their own and that they gather for themselves, but the Church is a reality that comes from Jesus, it is something prior to the believers that it welcomes and shelters in her bosom each one of the people who are part of it by their faith in Jesus Christ. The faith of each of those who form part of the Church is full and perfectly possible only in community, in that holy community that comes from Jesus Christ sustained by His Spirit.



The Church, that is the mystical body of Christ, His bride, should not be a Church that cares for herself and her subsistence, but a Church of people and for people. It is the duty of the Church to be for all people and not for herself. That is why in this being for others she must forge witnesses who, as signs for everyone, make manifest the grace of God who acts in all parts of the world. Therefore, "ecclesiality" in the Church must mean that all people in the Church must serve everyone without exception. For the Church exists to serve. The heart of the Church is prayer and of prayer and the encounter with the Risen One comes service. Therefore, serving is at the heart of the mission. As Jesus tells us: ***"Jesus summoned them and said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many,"*** (Mark 10:42-45).

To serve the poor, the elderly, the sick, the excluded, the marginalized from society; to all those who do not have power and cannot bring power, fame, success, or pay for their services. The Church, as we say so, that is the people who are part of it must fight for justice, freedom, and human dignity even when and if it harms them.

Mission, therefore, is the safeguard of the human, of man in all his unity, spirit, corporeal and spiritual body; safeguard of the man who is also a mystery, of the man of eternity and finitude.

If the Church comes from Jesus, the mission and the sending also come from Him. Jesus Christ sends us on His mission of compassion. For He is the Father's sent Son, and we are sent through Him, by Him, and in Him. For He is the one sent by the Father and we are sent in Him, by Him and as Him. And we are sent because Jesus Christ himself wanted to count on us to carry out the mission that the Father has entrusted to Him. He has sent us. Jesus is sent by the Father, for He is the Kingdom, the heart of the world that inhabits everything created. And He is also sent, as the second person sent from all eternity to "make redemption." And so, like everything that exists, exists through Him and in Him, so our mission and our being sent exists through the Son, in the Son, and proceed from the Son. With the offering of our lives we become children with the Son and we share His mission.

Ultimately, the mission of compassion for the world is the mission of Jesus, which the Father entrusts to him and to which He calls us and makes us his collaborators.



And what is the mission of compassion?

It is a mission of perfect and full dedication to everything created, to the extent of its own limit and possibility. And the model of delivery is God himself. God who without ceasing to be God can give Himself to the world in the incarnation of the Son, revealing himself as Agape, constituting the truth, all reality and the fundamental possibility of God.

In other words, the essence of God is His perfect surrender, that exit of yes. The Father in the full output and perfect surrender of Love begets the Son and inspires the Holy Spirit. In the essence of His surrender, of perfect Love, God cannot do anything else more than love and in that "loving and surrendering", He serves, He serves us, and becomes our servant.

God's perfect love is self-sacrificing, in total surrender, out of Himself, so perfect a love that it creates what He loves. And just as the Son is begotten in the Father's love, everything that exists is created in the Son, with the life of the Son, participating in the Son. And how the Father loves his begotten Son, He loves all that He has created through the Son, because He loves the Son.

All this labyrinth of words to have a glimpse of the mystery! Try to put into words, they will never express in all their meaning the exuberance of God's Love that in His begetting of the Son sends Him to His mission of love, mercy, and compassion to "make the redemption of human race", in the eternal incarnation of the Word as Himself by which the Triinitarian God becomes present.

To this same mission we are called, and united by Jesus Christ, as collaborators of his mission of love. In it, it will be our life completes the action of Jesus Christ in the world which crystallizes God's love in concrete gestures and reaches all the existential peripheries, restoring lives, witnessing the grace of God present in every corner of creation.

Jesus calls all people of all times, so that together with Him we may collaborate with His mission of compassion, helping to bring to fullness the Kingdom that is already among us, that is, already but not yet.



A VIEW FROM
THE SPIRITUAL
PERSPECTIVE.



A view from the Spiritual perspective

Volunteers in the Father's Kingdom

Today's world faces many challenges, which is why the Holy Father invites us to pray and be more aware of the consequences of the crises in which we are immersed, the economic one, the one caused by terrorism, the violence against the planet, the political and religious persecutions. Pope Francis calls us to pray and mobilize, as followers of Jesus, to collaborate with His mission of compassion for the world, in building of a more fraternal and supportive world. Our apostolic availability for His mission of compassion is the key to our mission.

While the global landscape can be bleak, the current crisis has not managed to quench the deep desire that exists in the human person for the world to be more worthy, just, and fraternal for all. The great challenge that we human beings have, believers or not, is to find new ways to make life more humane, dignified, and healthy. And this is what the mission of compassion is all about, to get excited, vibrate, work... In short, pray and mobilize our lives for the challenges the Holy Father proposes to us each month in his prayer intentions. These challenges are the place of incarnation of Christ's mission for the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network. There, in the Pope's prayer intentions, our mission is concretized.

We must regain our enthusiasm for Christ's mission, the passion for His Kingdom of Justice and Love. But, in addition, as followers of Jesus, we do not carry the mission forward in just any way, but we do it Jesus' style. Thus, it is the Way of the Heart that helps us to tune in with the attitudes and feelings of Jesus and which helps us to go out to meet our brothers and sisters.

From this personal and irreplaceable encounter that we have with Him in prayer, they will spring from within us the feelings and attitudes that moved the Heart of Jesus when He saw the suffering of so many people. He sought above all that the existence of human beings be more dignified and proposed with His own life a particular example so that the world would be more just. Approaching the Heart of Jesus, we also approach His sufferings and His feelings for everyone. That is why the Way of the Heart we are traveling on leads us on a mission of compassion for the world.

We need to let the love of God touch us so that the attitudes of Christ define our personal style. From there will arise in us the desire to be enthusiastic about His cause and his concrete mission, the passion for His project for a most humane and blissful life for everyone. The Love of the Lord forges in us His style for His mission.



The love of the Father manifested in Jesus is not theoretical. It is a concrete love expressed in words, gestures and works that we must allow to be incarnated in our lives in the place where the mission is concretized: the challenges of humanity and of the mission of the Church.

We are Followers of the Risen Christ.

In the Church, and forming a Worldwide Prayer Network, each of us is an apostle of prayer, or as Pope Francis likes to say, "missionary disciples". We collaborate with Jesus in His mission, responding to the particular call that He makes to us through His intentions.

Each month the Holy Father asks us to mobilize our love, so that it is not only in words or epidermal feelings. Our way of loving Jesus must be reflected in our gestures of compassion, solidarity, and mercy with others. Our love in the Church must proclaim Christ. "The Church must bring Jesus: this is the center of the Church. If it happened that the Church does not bring Jesus, it would be a dead Church," (Homily in The Chapel of Saint Martha, September 7, 2013).

He sent us to make all peoples His disciples(Matthew 28:19-20), by means of action that proclaim that the kingdom of God is already among us. Our way of living in today's society must be a life choice of building healthier relationships and a more just and fraternal world.

If we believed a little more in the strength of the testimony and the transformative power that our actions have in the hearts of others, we would strive to make the world keep believing that Jesus is still alive in our midst. No one is convinced that Christ is Good News to all humans merely through speeches, treatises, or documents. When people in the gospel met the teacher, they were attracted to Him because He expressed authentic and true interest in their lives. How then should we proceed? Revealing through our actions that the other is important to us. This attitude is the result of prayer and personal encounter with Jesus, that He makes us look at people through his eyes.

Pope Francis has already repeated on several occasions that, "Whoever does not believe or seek God may not have felt this concern because a testimony has been lacking." Our responsibility as missionary disciples is to proclaim with our lives that God loves everyone unconditionally. And so that we may correctly express that love, we must discern well what concrete gestures make that love believable, and which ones do not belong to the heart of Christianity.



Every time our compassion, solidarity and mercy reach the lives of people who feel excluded from a system that discards lives, we are making the Kingdom of God present. When we contribute to promoting a society that is more just, fraternal society, healthier, dignified, and solidarity, we are announcing that the project from the Father is an ever-present reality.

Christians must be a credible alternative as a testimony that it is possible to live in a more humane society, and in a society where a "culture of encounter" is being built. Our lifestyle should help banish the growth of loneliness, in communication and pragmatism in relationships.

The invitation that Pope Francis extends every month, is to pray and to mobilize ourselves together to deal with the challenges we have ahead. This is the way to be in tune with the Heart of Jesus, who did not remain indifferent to the suffering of humanity. The work of Jesus was always for the benefit of a healthier and more fraternal life for all.



A VIEW FROM
THE POPE'S
PERSPECTIVE.



A view from the Pope's writings

The Social Dimension of Evangelization

In the words of Pope Francis: "To evangelize is to present to world the Kingdom of God. Yet "no partial or fragmentary definition reflects the rich, complex and dynamic reality that leads to Evangelization if it not at the risk of impoverishing it and of distorting it". Now I would like to share my concerns about the social dimension of evangelization precisely because, if this dimension is not properly explained, there is always the risk of distorting the authentic and integral meaning that the mission of evangelization has.

Communal and societal repercussions of the kerygma

Kerygma has an inescapably social content: at the very heart of the Gospel is life in community life and commitment to others. The content of the first proclamation has an immediate moral implication centered on charity.

Confessing to a Father who infinitely loves each human being implies discovering that He "confers on them an infinite dignity". Confessing that the Son of God took on our human flesh means that each person's humanity has been elevated to the very heart of God. Confessing that Jesus gave His blood for us prevents us from retaining any doubt about the limitless love that ennobles every human being. His redemption has a social dimension because "God, in Christ, not only redeems the individual person, but also the social relations between men". Confessing that the Holy Spirit acts in everyone implies recognizing that He seeks to penetrate every human situation and every social bond: "The Holy Spirit possesses an infinite creativity, typical of a divine mind, which unties the knots of human affairs, even the most complex and impenetrable".

Evangelization seeks to cooperate with this liberating action of the Spirit. The very mystery of the Trinity reminds us that we were made in the image of that divine communion, for which we cannot fulfill ourselves nor save ourselves on our own. From the heart of the Gospel, we recognize the intimate connection that exists between evangelization and human promotion, which must necessarily find expression and development in all work of evangelization.

Acceptance of the first proclamation, which invites us to let ourselves be loved and to love him with the very love that He Himself brings forth in the life of the person and in his actions a first and fundamental reaction: desire, seek and care for the good of others. This inseparable connection between the reception of the message of salvation and a genuine fraternal love appears in several scriptural texts that should

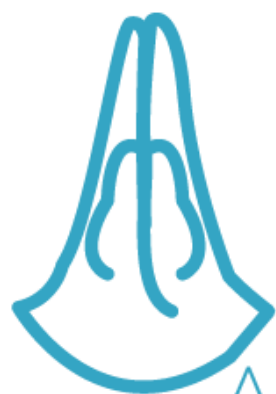


be considered and meditated carefully upon, in order to appreciate all their consequences. It is a message to which we often get used to, we repeat it almost mechanically, but we do not make sure it has a real impact on our lives and on our communities.

How dangerous and harmful this habit is that leads us to lose the amazement, the captivation, the enthusiasm for living the Gospel of fraternity and justice! The Word of God teaches that the brothers is the permanent prolongation of the incarnation for each one of us: **“As you did it to one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it to me”** (Mt 25:40). What we do with others has a transcendent dimension: **“The measure you give will be the measure you get”** (Mt 7:2); and corresponds to the mercy that God has shown us: **“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you... For the measure you give will be the measure you get back”** (Lk 6:36-38). What these passages express is the absolute priority of “going out of oneself towards one’s brother” as one of the two main commandments which ground every moral norm and as the clearest sign for discerning the path to spiritual growth in response to God’s absolute free gift. For this very reason, “the service of charity is also a constitutive dimension of the Church’s mission and an inalienable expression of its very essence”. Just as the Church is missionary by nature, it also inevitably springs from that nature effective charity with the neighbor, the compassion that he understands, assists and promotes”.

(Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, 176-179).

To dig deeper. Resources. Appendix Three. “The marginalized with a home.”



A VIEW FROM
THE PERSPECTIVE.
OF PRAYER

A View from the Perspective of Prayer

The Challenges of Compassion


Persons leave footprints on others. Some are painful, but others are full of love, acceptance, compassion, mercy. We have many to thank for who we are. Throughout our lives we surely met persons who gave us the appropriate advice, a handshake, and there was no lack of warm and kind hugs that gave us security and contentment. Those people have left an indelible mark of love on each one of us. Can you imagine the indelible mark Jesus left on all those he healed, freed, resurrected? Jesus found Himself with people in need of compassion and He gave himself up to them to the point of death.

But Jesus was not a quack doctor. He did not come merely to patch up people's lives or apply wet handkerchiefs to try to cool conflicts, but to start a deep inner revolution that begins in the hearts of all people and hopes that it will spread to all the ends of the world. He inaugurated a mission of compassion.

Jesus invites us to live from compassion as a fundamental attitude for life. Compassion sums up the love we receive from Jesus and the love we are called to give to others. It is the synthesis of the loving dynamic with which the Lord first engages us in love and compassion and then invites us to do the same for others. Can He count on our collaboration so that the Father's offer of love from the Father reaches all the ends of the earth? Jesus was not indifferent to the pain, hope, and faith of His people. He let the lives of others resonate strongly in His heart and responded accordingly with His love and mercy. Those situations were challenges of their time so that they deeply touched His heart. Surely they were topics of conversation with His Father during His moments of prayer.

To have a part with Him, we need to transform our hearts, attune them to His, listen to the voice of God within us and learn to look with His eyes. Only in this way will there be a guarantee of interior availability for what the Spirit of God inspires us to do. How did Jesus carry out His mission of compassion and how can we collaborate with him?

The first challenge that Jesus encountered was to communicate that the love of His Father is free, gratuitous. This was and will be the first and greatest challenge. To feel love gratuitously given, love "for free", unearned. It is wonderful to feel that we are loved for who we are and not for our achievements and conquests. Living love freely given is an experience that forms the very foundation of ourselves as human beings. When we can experience this love, we open ourselves to relationships with others with a grateful heart. There is no deeper experience that engenders a compassionate



heart than to feel loved unconditionally. Jesus needs us to understand that His love for us is not because of our achievements and personal conquests. That experience of love opens us to have compassion for others.

The second great challenge that Jesus recognized in His time was to help others to regain confidence in themselves. When, due to some circumstance in life, we have failed to realize our dreams or reach our goals, we feel internally that our energy is declining and our confidence is shattered. It is this moment when we need that opportune word that manages to restore our confidence. That firm hand that reaches out and gets us back on our feet. Jesus helped many to regain their confidence in themselves and thus, feel that their life resurfaces. It is the experience of being reborn that gets us back on track. Feeling that someone helps us regain confidence in ourselves is one of those experiences that are most strongly engraved in the soul. The presence of another, his help, his encouragement, can help us rediscover our value before the Lord and how the Lord looks at us. Therefore, the confidence in ourselves must arise from the very value of who we are before God, and from feeling loved by Him.

The third challenge that Jesus perceived was the need to help others to experience forgiveness and mercy. When we truly love another, we yearn not to disappoint. We want to be faithful and give ourselves wholeheartedly to that relationship. But sometimes we are not consistent enough with that desire to offer ourselves, and we fail. We have all experienced what it means to break another's trust, and when that happens, we feel enormous pain and a need to restore communion. Because our hearts were created for communion, when we feel that we have broken it, we need to recover it. Feeling forgiven is the greatest experience of gratuitous love, love given freely, even . Because when there is no merit to be loved, when misery itself has been exposed and there is no mask that can hide the ugliness of sin, there is someone who believes in us again and offers us His love and trust again. Jesus restored the bond of friendship between God and humanity. He communicated to us that the Father never tires of forgiving and offering His love.

Jesus recognized numerous challenges present in the society of His time, which He made visible and to which He responded. Challenges such as the inequalities, gaps, injustices, oppression, exclusion of one another, senselessness that brought suffering to many people of that time. Jesus contemplated, prayed to His Father, and discerned these realities, to which He later responded. Thus, first of all, He taught that the one they called God was the "Father" of all, that He loved all without excluding anyone and especially the most fragile, needy, and poor, the Father who made the sun rise over the just and the unjust.



That same Spirit of Jesus that inspired Him at that time, inspires us today in the bosom of the Church, to attend to and to respond the challenges of this time. Nowadays, these are the challenges of humanity and the mission of the Church that are present in the Pope's prayer intentions. These challenges the Church discerns, contemplating the world and perceiving the intentions of the compassionate Heart of Jesus.

The Pope as Bishop of Rome and successor of Peter makes visible the challenges of our time, as Jesus perceived them and communicated them to his disciples. Jesus understood that to respond to these challenges he could not do it alone, but it was necessary to do so in community. Today, the Church invites us to be part of this Worldwide Prayer Network that through our prayer and action collaborates with Jesus in His mission of compassion for the world.

The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network wants to connect people with the Heart of Jesus, so that, feeling like Him, they can make their own the challenges that the Church gives us in the same Spirit of Jesus, and collaborate in the building of the Kingdom of God here on earth.

To dig deeper. Resources. Annex One. "To scandalize with tenderness."

Suggested Exercises.

Availability for Christ's mission.

We invite you to practice an exercise inspired by the book *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*. It is an adaptation of points number 230 to 237 "Contemplation to obtain Love for God" found in *The Spiritual Exercises*. Take some time to be heart to heart with the Lord. Be silent inside and enter into a climate of prayer:

- 1.** The first thing that should be noted is that love ought has to be put more into deeds than in words. Love is a decision and concrete work.
- 2.** The second thing, in turn, is that love is communication in which those who love, they give themselves and communicate what they have and can. Each one gives to the extent of his credit and possession and according to his ability. And mutually those who love each other express affection, love, and dedication in what they give other reciprocally.

After you have taken some time to consider these two things, imagine that you find yourself in front of all the Saints in Heaven, and even in front of the Mother of Jesus, with the angels of the Lord who are all there for you and accompanying you at this time. They will be your witnesses and your allies.

1. At this time, ask the Lord to make known to you all the good that He has given you and you have received. May He help you recognize it and like it so that having recognized Him completely, entirely, you can make yourself to be available to His mission of compassion for the world and collaborate in it with Him.
2. Bring to your memory what you have experienced on this journey of The Way of the Heart. The gift of the Love of the Father manifested in Jesus Christ passes through the heart again the way in which He knows your wounded and needy heart has never stopped to be by your side to forgive you, heal you, and free you from those things that enslave you. Look again at the world between its tensions of Life and Death and how the Spirit of the Lord comes to your aid and support when you choose Life. Meditate, reflect on the good that the Lord gives you sustaining you in Life as a creature loved and saved by Him. And after you having tasted these things in your heart, ask yourself what would you like to offer the Lord as a response of love to so much good that He gives you? What do you think would be fair, convenient, or that you would want to give to Him?
3. See now how the Lord is present and comes to you in everything created, in the people with whom you share, friends, family; in every situation you live in, your work, studies, fun; in places travel to, in all of nature, animals, plants, air -- in every created thing that you know and even in those creatures which you do not even know of, somewhere on the face of the earth. Other brothers and sisters in Christ from other continents and countries. Travel the world, take the time to behold in your imagination everything in creation, seeing all the gifts the Lord has given you so that when you see them, you may recognize Him and acknowledge His presence. And ask yourself what you feel in your heart as you contemplate such a great gift? What arises in your heart? What are you disposed to make as an offering?
4. In that created that you know and in that that you don't even you know of his existence somewhere on the planet. Other brothers, from others continents, countries Travel the world, fool around with your imagination on everything the creation that the Lord has given you so that when you see it you have Him in mind, to get your attention.
5. Consider at this time how the Lord works and works for you in everything created. He sustains life, perfects it, and makes it grow. The Lord dwells in things and creatures, works in every situation, and arranges things for the good of those He loves. Meditate and enjoy the way in which the Lord works from within creation and sustains life for you. What surges within you? What answer do you give the Lord for all the work that He does for you?
6. See how everything created has not been able to give itself life or sustain itself.

Everything, absolutely everything comes from the Father. Everything is a gift, the good, the beauty, justice, goodness, every quality in you comes from God, everything that you admire, and love comes from God. He is the universal giver, there is nothing outside of Himself, everything exists in Him, through Him and for Him. Even yourself. Contemplate what you love, what you admire, the qualities in your brothers. Let your heart be affected and be grateful for the many gifts in the world.

7. Offer the Lord all that you are and possess, because you come from Him. Offer your life by making yourself available to serve His mission of compassion for the world. Pray with devotion and affection our Prayer of Offering to close this moment of prayer.

*Good Father, I know you are with me.
 Here I am, on this new day.
 Put my heart once more next to the Heart of Your Son Jesus
 that is delivered for me
 and that He comes to me in the Eucharist.
 May your Holy Spirit make me His friend and His apostle
 available for His mission.
 I put in your hands my joys and hopes
 my labors and sufferings
 all that I am and have
 In communion with my brothers and sisters
 in this Worldwide Prayer Network.
 With Mary I offer you my day
 for the mission of the Church
 and for the Pope's prayer intentions for this month.
 Amen.*

Practice of the Thematic Examination or Review.

What defines the center of our charism in the Pope's Prayer Network is "the availability attitude." The openness of heart and mind to allow ourselves to be led wherever our service is greatest in Jesus Christ's mission of compassion for the world. But this attitude of availability is not that it materializes in that or in this work, but rather it is an inner disposition that will or will not be materialize in an action.

And as we have already meditated on this mission, it becomes concrete for us in the

prayer intentions that the Pope entrusts to us each month. These intentions are challenges from the world that ask to be taken care of, our brothers and our common home suffer their negative consequences. We must not delude ourselves into thinking that these challenges sometimes touch on realities that are far from us and that we can only pray at a distance without involving our action. Every month, it is possible that every challenge unravels specific attitudes in our daily lives that can help us to bring "down to earth" the intention entrusted to us. And that is the great challenge of finding true solidarity as we consider the prayer intention by bringing to our daily lives the fundamental attitudes that lie in every intention. For example, when the challenge asks us to "pray for the young people of Africa so that they can find opportunities for work and study in their own places", we can quickly think of young people and the opportunities we have in our own communities, neighborhoods, countries. And how do we get involved or how can we be involved in this concrete action?

At this moment, we propose that you reread the ways in which you concretize in your daily life the attitudes that are the basis for this month's intentions. If you bring them to everyday life.

1. Start this moment of your review by taking a distance from your everyday activities.. Allow silence in your heart, breathe deeply several times slowly. Be aware that the Lord is present to you and comes to meet you.
2. Thank the Lord for your participation in the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network and your call to be an Apostle in the service of His mission of compassion for the world. Be thankful that He chose you.
3. Review the intention that the Pope entrusts to us and try to discover what basic attitudes are in it: dialogue, peace, harmony, creativity, solidarity, listening, be a bridge, cultivate daily prayer, etc.
4. Think about how you have been living these attitudes during the month. Make memory for days, in your family, work, fun, community.
5. What would you like to have lived differently?
6. What do you want to do next? What specific attitude do you want to cultivate for what's left of the month?
7. Take note of your purpose.
8. Put it at the feet of Jesus Christ and ask the Holy Spirit for help to be available to cultivate the proposed attitude.
9. Say goodbye to the Lord and close this moment.

To dig deeper. Resources. Annex Two. "Praying with life (experiences)."



A MISSION OF
COMPASSION



RESOURCES

Resources

Appendix One

Scandalizing with the attitude of tenderness

Jean Vanier says in his book, *To Love Until the End*, that "Jesus asks us to follow him on the path of (choosing to act with attitudes of): smallness, inter communion, from our hearts, with desires for forgiveness, trust and vulnerability, without giving up, and at other times, to assume the role of leaders, and teachers, called to exercise a certain authority over people and groups with power and justice, kindness and humility. He asks us to live (daily) all the madness of the gospel: to love without measure, to be compassionate, not to judge, but to forgive incessantly, even to love our enemy. This is impossible if we do not strip ourselves of our own garments and become men nude before God and so to "clothe ourselves with Christ."

We know that being good is not easy and that being consistent is not a one-time task. It supposes living an ongoing desire to clothe ourselves with Christ to communicate to the world the beauty, goodness, and truth of His love. Do you know? There are people who depend on your coherence of life to get closer to Jesus. Yes, they need of the testimony of your life, of the beauty of your words, the goodness of your heart, and of the courage to live knowing that God loves you in all your truth without judging you.

We are invited to express with simplicity of heart the love that God has placed in our hearts. We must assume the role of manifesting to the world the joy and hope is born of faith. We must dare to scandalize the world with tenderness.

Appendix Two

Praying about life (experiences).

We all know the age-old tension between prayer and action. If we pray without a social or apostolic perspective, we are reminded of "Not everyone who says: Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 7:21). However, if we turn fully to apostolic action, we run the risk of reciting the words of Jesus: "Marta, Martha, you worry about many things, when only one is necessary. Mary chose the better part, and it will not be taken away," (Luke 10:41).

Christian prayer runs the risk, at times, of going down "a path parallel to the paths of life" (Velasco, 2008, p. 129). It cannot be delinked or be indifferent to the events of the world, because the praying Church cannot forget that she received the command to

"go and make disciples of all nations," (Matthew 28:19).

Every month the Pope entrusts his World Prayer Network an intention that we must bring to prayer and action. This intention touches the lives of every male and woman on the planet. It is a key to reading and understanding the course of life that happens around us and a call to live in coherence with what we are praying for.

The apostolic availability that we need to cultivate in order to join the project of building the Kingdom of God together with Jesus Christ will not be possible without a conversion of the sensitivity, and without deep, intimate, and apostolic prayer. Prayer connects us with the world because life is concrete. "God dwells in real things, in real places and in real people" (Velasco, 2008). The praying and apostolic Church is called to be present wherever there is a need to proclaim the faith, but also where there is an abandoned to take in, a "discarded" to integrate, a hungry to feed, a naked to clothe, a prisoner to visit... In short, where the compassionate heart of Jesus wants to be present through our concrete and efficient help. The monthly prayer intention embodies our prayer and our action in this mission.

Appendix Three

The Marginalized Homeless, including those in our houses

Watching suffering through the television screen is always less shocking and terrible to see so many marginalized people, and in many cases elderly, living in the squares, in the streets or sidewalks of our big cities. Have you ever stopped to look at them and get close to them? Maybe. The truth is that in most cases we live in a fast-paced world and immersed only in our thoughts, that the pain and suffering of others are part of the everyday landscape. There are many people who also suffer from marginalization, loneliness and abandonment in our cities and they are not exactly on the streets. Many of them are elderly and circulate in the corridors of our houses, sit in our living rooms, and share daily bread with us. They do not live on the street, they have a place to rest, but they feel equally exposed to the lack of affection and care. They do not stop breaking bread, and eat properly, but they long for the precious time that comes with an empathetic and friendly listening. Suffering and poverty, loneliness and abandonment, marginalization and even mistreatment are no longer realities that we only see on the streets: they are also under our roof.

Pope Francis invites us to look at the life we lead and to join in the great challenge he presented in an intention of prayer: "So that the elderly, marginalized and the lonely may find, even in the big cities, opportunities for encounter and solidarity." The streets should not become anyone's home, but especially not of the elderly. But neither

should our homes become a place where our grandparents or elderly people are marginalized. We need to recover what makes us human as Jesus taught us: to be compassionate. This is a great challenge today: to create spaces for encounters with our elders and to be in solidarity with them. Remember, not only corruption and inhumane policies generate suffering and pain in others, but also indifference.

A MISSION OF
COMPASSION



STEP 8
BOOK 10