

Homily for the 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time – Cycle C

**Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
Springfield, Illinois**

November 16, 2025

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Reverend Fathers, Deacons, and my dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Today the Catholic Church observes World Day of the Poor. In keeping with the theme of this Jubilee Year calling us to be “Pilgrims of Hope,” the theme proclaimed by Pope Leo XIV for this World Day of the Poor is, “You, O Lord, are my hope,” taken from Psalm 71 (*Ps* 71:5).

In his message for this World Day of the Poor, Pope Leo said, “Amid life’s trials, our hope is inspired by the firm and reassuring certainty of God’s love, poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. That hope does not disappoint” as Saint Paul wrote in his *Letter to the Romans* (cf. *Rom* 5:5).¹ The Holy Father pointed out that “The poor can be witnesses to a strong and steadfast hope, precisely because they embody it in the midst of uncertainty, poverty, instability and marginalization. They cannot rely on the security of power and possessions; on the contrary, they are at their mercy and often victims of them. Their hope must necessarily be sought elsewhere. By

recognizing that God is our first and only hope, we too pass from fleeting *hopes* to a lasting *hope*. Once we desire that God accompany us on the journey of life, material wealth becomes relativized, for we discover the real treasure that we need.”²

When we hear the word “poverty,” we usually think of lack of money or other material goods. But there are many forms of poverty. Thus, Pope Leo points out that “The gravest form of poverty is not to know God. ... This is a rule of faith and the secret of hope: all this earth’s goods, material realities, worldly pleasures, economic prosperity, however important, cannot bring happiness to our hearts. Wealth often disappoints and can lead to tragic situations of poverty – above all the poverty born of the failure to recognize our need for God and of the attempt to live without Him.”³

Saint Teresa of Calcutta once said, “There is hunger for ordinary bread, and there is hunger for love, for kindness, for thoughtfulness, and this is the great poverty that makes people suffer so much.”⁴

Just last month, Pope Leo XIV published the first apostolic exhortation of his pontificate, *Dilexi te*, Latin for, “I have loved you,” quoting the *Book of Revelation* (*Rev.* 3:9), which he addressed to all Christians on love for the poor. The Holy Father notes that Our Lord insisted that “one cannot love

God without extending one's love to the poor. Love for our neighbor is tangible proof of the authenticity of our love for God ... For this reason, works of mercy are recommended as a sign of the authenticity of worship, which, while giving praise to God, has the task of opening us to the transformation that the Spirit can bring about in us, so that we may all become an image of Christ and his mercy towards the weakest."⁵

Here in our diocese, Catholic Charities has been providing a wide range of vital social services for over one hundred years in ten communities throughout the twenty-eight counties of central Illinois. Area Offices operate in the communities of Alton, Carlinville, Decatur, Effingham, Granite City, Mattoon, Quincy, and Springfield. In addition, Catholic Charities manages Catholic Children's Home in Alton and The St. Anne Residence in Beardstown.

Catholic Charities' vast array of "Continuum of Care" services include counseling programs, senior services and guardianship, health care, residential care, independent living, special education, emergency shelter care, family preservation services, food and clothing distribution, St. John's Breadline in Springfield, Meals on Wheels in Decatur, crisis assistance, MedAssist, Mobile Food Pantry, and Catholic Charities Legal Services.

We will have a special opportunity to help the poor through our collection for the Diocesan Campaign for Justice and Hope, which will be taken up on the weekend of November 28-29. Rooted in the Gospel and Catholic teaching on the dignity of every person, the Diocesan Campaign for Justice and Hope supports local organizations that help break the cycle of poverty and protect life at all stages, especially the unborn. Inspired by the Corporal Works of Mercy, the campaign also encourages strong family life as a foundation for lasting hope and stability. Through education, advocacy, and financial grants to organizations that uphold Catholic values, the Diocesan Campaign for Justice and Hope helps Catholics live out their call to love their neighbors and promote the common good.

In today's Gospel, Jesus foretells the destruction of the Temple, a devastating event that happened on August 30th in the year 70 A.D., only thirty-five to forty years after Our Lord spoke these words, when Roman soldiers broke into the Holy of Holies and stole everything they could find and commemorated their rampage in stone on the Arch of Titus in Rome. Even today, we can see immortalized the lines of Jewish prisoners and of treasures, including the golden candelabra from the Temple. As He spoke of

the damage to Jewish life and culture, Jesus also foretold the coming of wars, division and persecution.

The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem was in the living memory of many of the people for whom Luke wrote his Gospel. If that was the past, for some, the present was one of persecution and suffering. As some early Christians expected the end of the world to be approaching very soon, they became so preoccupied with expecting the Second Coming as a very imminent reality that they stopped bothering with the realities of everyday life, prompting Saint Paul to write in his Second Letter to the Thessalonians, as we heard in today's second reading, "We hear that some are conducting themselves among you in a disorderly way, by not keeping busy but minding the business of others." Thus, Saint Paul gave the example of his own diligence for them to imitate and instructed them that that if anyone was unwilling to work, neither should that one eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:7-12).

This admonition applies to us as well. We should not be enamored with riches, for the material world around us will eventually pass away. On the other hand, we should not neglect to be diligent in our work. The Second Vatican Council was very insistent on the value of human work, saying, "This council exhorts Christians, as citizens of two cities, to strive to

discharge their earthly duties conscientiously and in response to the Gospel spirit. They are mistaken who, knowing that we have here no abiding city but seek one which is to come, think that they may therefore shirk their earthly responsibilities. For they are forgetting that by the faith itself they are more obliged than ever to measure up to these duties, each according to his proper vocation.”⁶

The word “diligence” in English comes from the Latin word *diligo*, which means “to love” or “have a special regard for something.” To be diligent in our work means that our work is motivated by love. Saint Josemaría Escrivá wrote that, “Work is born of love; it is a manifestation of love and is directed toward love. We see the hand of God, not only in the wonders of nature, but also in our experience of work and effort. Work thus becomes prayer and thanksgiving, because we know we are placed on earth by God, that we are loved by Him, and made heirs to His promises.”⁷

Jesus offers us hope. He tells His followers that, yes, life is difficult and will possibly become more difficult, but they are not to give up, not to lose hope. He is there for us and will be with us forever and always.

May God give us this grace. Amen.

¹ Pope Leo XIV, *Message of the Holy Father for the Ninth World Day of the Poor*, 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time, November 16, 2025, n. 1; accessed online at <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/poor/documents/20250613-messaggio-giornata-poveri.html>.

² Pope Leo XIV, *Message of the Holy Father for the Ninth World Day of the Poor*, n. 2.

³ Pope Leo XIV, *Message of the Holy Father for the Ninth World Day of the Poor*, n. 3.

⁴ Mother Teresa of Calcutta, *Mother Teresa: Essential Writings* (2001), accessed online at https://www.azquotes.com/author/14530-Mother_Teresa/tag/hunger.

⁵ Pope Leo XIV, Apostolic Letter *Dilexi te*, To All Christians on Love for the Poor, October 4, 2025, nn. 27-28; accessed online at https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20251004-dilexi-te.html.

⁶ Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, December 7, 1965, n. 43; accessed online at https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

⁷ Saint Josemaría Escrivá, *Christ is Passing By*, 48.