

WORLD LEPROSY DAY SUNDAY 31ST JANUARY 2021



Dear Friends,

The last year has seen the headlines dominated by COVID-19 pandemic and the devastation it has caused in the world. It is, I think, quite easy to overlook other diseases, especially a disease like leprosy which many people suspect is a disease of the past.

Leprosy requires our attention and the work of our Order does much to keep this need for work and treatment in the public mind. Even with the programmes in place there are over 200,000 new cases diagnosed worldwide each year. Millions of people are now living with some form of disability as a result of their having contracted leprosy.

The label "leprosy" and the horrid disability that can result if this age-old disease goes untreated can lead to social exclusion. Those affected by leprosy still continue to face discrimination, reinforced in some countries by outdated laws that make leprosy grounds for divorce, prevent people with the disease from participating in public life or place other restrictions on their activities.

Some prayers that we might say on Sunday as we commemorate World Leprosy Day:

THE LEPROSY MISSION:

Almighty Father,
the giver of life and health,
look mercifully on those who suffer from leprosy:
Stretch out your hand to touch and heal them
as Jesus did during His earthly life;
Grant wisdom and insight to those who are seeking
the prevention and cure of the disease;

Give skill and sympathy
to those who minister to the patients;
Reunite the separated with their families and friends;
And inspire your people with the task set before The Leprosy Mission,
That it may never lack either the staff or the means to carry on its healing work,
in accordance with Your will,
and to the glory of Your holy name.

We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ,
Your Son, our Lord.

Amen.

A PRAYER FOR THE LIGHT OF JESUS:

O God,
may the light of Jesus shine continually
to drive away the darkness people affected by leprosy face.
Gracious God, the comfort of all who sorrow,
the strength of all who suffer:

Let the cry of those affected by leprosy come to you,
that they may find your mercy present with them in all their need;
and give us we pray, the strength to serve them for your sake.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ,
Your Son, our Lord.

Amen.

A PRAYER FROM THE ECCLESIASTICAL GRAND PRIOR, + MICHELE PENNISI:

Father of infinite mercy,
lover of life,
in the uncertainty of this time, full of darkness,
and in this moment of concern and anguish
for the spread of the virus in many countries of the world,
we turn to you with the trust of your children.

Never before have we felt so clearly
that we belong to a single human family,
despite the fear of contagion affecting our social relationships,
and the pursuit of individual interest at the expense of the common good.

Amen.

THE ORDER PRAYER:

O God,
who has chosen us to be an Order of Knights
under the blessed protection of Saint Lazarus,
grant that we,
in full devotion to you and abounding in neighbourly charity,
may show ourselves invincible against the enemies of the Cross,
remaining faithful unto death,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

*Fr Andrew
Chaplain-General*