

Here I Am

Opening Prayer

Strong and tender God, help me know your care as you hold me in the palm of your hand. Fill me with your joy.



Evangelii Gaudium

“The whole Church is called to be missionary. If she is to take up this missionary impulse, she has to go forth to everyone without exception. But to whom should she go first?

When we read the Gospel we find a clear indication; not so much our friends and wealthy neighbours, but above all the poor and the sick, those who are normally despised and overlooked, ‘those who cannot repay you’. We have to state, without mincing our words, that there is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor. May we never abandon them. (paragraph 48)

The Words of St Louise

O what a happiness, if, without offending God, we should be employed only in the service of the most destitute in all things. (SWL p833)

Never before have we had a Pope who spoke so articulately about the service of the poor! Vincent and Louise must be rubbing their hands with glee as they hear him echo their own words. The challenge they all issue to us is one and the same. How can we respond? Let us sing!

AIC Reflection

I the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Who shall I send?

Refrain

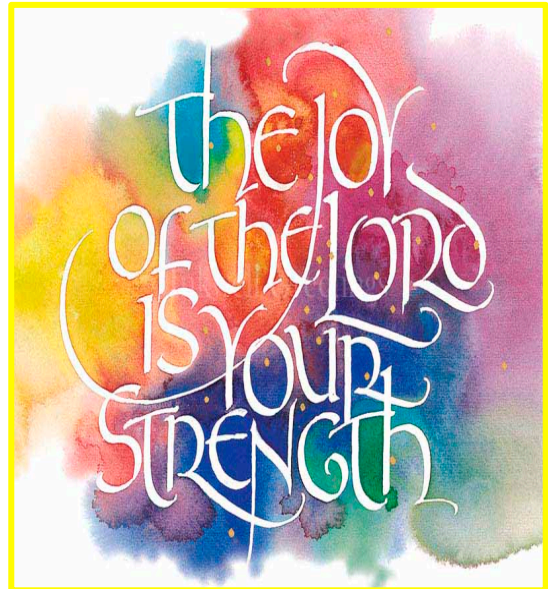
*Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

I the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?

Refrain

I the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them,
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them,
Whom shall I send?

Refrain



AIC Reflection

Reflection

The Pope's encyclical is called *Evangelii Gaudium*, which translates as *The Joy of the Gospel*. The quote from Louise starts "O what happiness...."

Is the joy of being held in God's hand evident in how we serve?

- How whole hearted is my 'here I am'?
- How generously do I share my time, my gifts, my faith
 - With the group?
 - Within my service?
- Are we as a group reaching the poorest people?
- If not then what can we do about that?
- How joyfully do I serve?
- What stops me from being joyful?
- What concrete steps can I take to be more joyful in my membership of the group and my service of those in need?



Closing Prayer

*Open my eyes that they may see the deepest needs of people;
Move my hands that they may feed the hungry;
touch my heart that it may bring warmth to the despairing;
teach me the generosity that welcomes strangers;
let me share my possessions to clothe the naked;
Give me the care that strengthens the sick;
Make me share in the quest to set the prisoners free.
In sharing our anxieties and our love, our poverty and our
prosperity, we partake of the divine presence. Amen.*