

indigenous, the homeless, the aged, those with mental illness or those with drug addictions, are treated as less worthwhile or of lesser dignity while the pockets of the wealthy are further filled. As an individual, I can make a small difference but as individuals working together we can make big differences.

In his recent apostolic exhortation, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, which is on the call to holiness in today's world, in Chapter 3, Pope Francis draws on the Beatitudes. He tells us: "Hungering and thirsting for righteousness: that is holiness" (GE 79). Try and get hold of a copy and read it. It is available on the Holy See website in a number of languages.

For personal and communal reflection and prayer:

1. What is your story of becoming aware of injustice in your world? Are you ever unjust in the ways you treat others? Or yourself?
2. Are you aware of the injustices in this world, in your community or social context? What can you do to bring about difference or do you lack the courage?
3. Have you ever considered, or prayed for, the varying gifts that people, those who are not ordained, including the married, single and consecrated, and those ordained, have that could be used together to foster the cause of Justice?

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Apostles for Today

Prayer and Reflection - November 2018

HOLINESS, A JOURNEY MADE TOGETHER

"Hungering and thirsting for righteousness: that is holiness" (GE 79).

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice for they will be filled." (Mt 5:6)

I think I have been hungering and thirsting for righteousness since I was a small child growing up in the fifties as the middle child with four brothers. My dad was on the basic wage and didn't want my mother to work. Mum struggled to make ends meet. The boys would play outside while I would help mum with the housework. I was told that the money would have to be spent on the boys' education rather than mine as they would be the bread-winners for their families. Fortunately, I won scholarships and was able to go through to University level and postgraduate studies. Lots of experiences though made me hunger and thirst for women not to be pushed into the background or abused but rather for all people to be treated with equal dignity and respect. I believed that God loved all of us equally.

No matter how poor our family was, my mother would help out others and my father was a member of the local St Vincent de Paul conference. As I grew I became aware of the neighbourhood, the society, and the world and the injustices that abound.

I started teaching primary school at nineteen and four

years later was Principal of a Catholic primary school with some pupils who came from the local area and others who came from a very large Migrant Hostel. In the nineteen-seventies, they came from Argentina, Chile, East Timor, Vietnam, Czechoslovakia, the Philippines, Hungary, Iran, and other troubled parts of the world.

As a staff we worked hard to ensure that these children could get as good a start in their new home as possible. They arrived not speaking English and most had experienced trauma. Some had parents who had been killed or that they had been separated from.

They missed friends, grandparents and extended family members. In such a situation how could I not hunger and thirst for righteousness and do whatever I could to try and bring it about for these children and their families.

There are so many things that make me angry in this world because they are not in accord with what I believe is the will of God. For me, righteousness is about trying to discern what God wants for people and for all of creation. This means, first of all, being in right relationship with our God of infinite love. How I live and the choices I make matter. I also need to work at being in right relationship with myself and with others. I was older when I came to know Pallotti's charism and with it so many things fell into place and were inspirational.

St Vincent Pallotti was an apostle in the way he lived his spiritual, priestly and corporal life. He worked at bringing about change to correct some of the injustices of his time. He saw boys who needed education and set up evening schools for them. He found women to care for orphaned

girls. He had his eyes open to the society around him and found ways to make a difference. He gathered people from various states of life to help him to carry out the works that would transform the lives of those who were cared for. His actions showed that he hungered and thirsted after justice and did something about bringing it about, not just as an individual but as a member of a growing community.

This very much followed the way Jesus lived as an Apostle of the Father. There are so many stories in the Gospel of Jesus challenging people to live in right relationship with their God.

The story of the cleansing of the temple is the one that first springs to mind of Jesus acting with righteous anger.

Before the destruction of the temple Judaism was a cultic religion where people needed to bring offerings of animals and birds to be sacrificed by the priests. The problem was that the sellers and money-changers had moved onto the forecourt of the temple which was part of the religious precinct. This meant that profane Roman coins, such as the denarius were being exchanged for acceptable Jewish shekels and so defiling this sacred space. As a Jew, Jesus could see that this way of acting was not in accord with Jewish teaching, with being in right relationship with God and so he did something about it. Arguably this was the final straw that led to his crucifixion.

In today's world standing for a viewpoint that differs from the popular one takes courage too. Standing up for and welcoming migrants and refugees can take courage. Confidence in a God of infinite love can give us courage to take a stand when some groups of people, such as the