

# Putting Pope Francis' call for encounter into action



The World Day of the Poor is an opportunity for communities to come together, reflect on their experiences, and discern the pressing needs of the community. It is a time to set intentions to build true connections.

Poverty has been defined for decades as lacking the financial resources to meet a certain standard of living. However, poverty exists in many forms. Poverty is not just lacking material wealth. It is lacking in anything – everyone is poor in something.

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## What forms of poverty exist in your community, diocese, and country?

This year, we can each use the World Day of the Poor to focus on sharing what we are rich in and being part of a cultural shift towards looking out for each other.

We are called to recognise that poverty is not something which simply exists, but rather it has varied causes. It can be built and reinforced through structures of inequality and systems of indifference to people. It can take the form of spiritual, emotional, or mental poverty, as well as material hardship.

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## How have you encountered with people in your community this year?

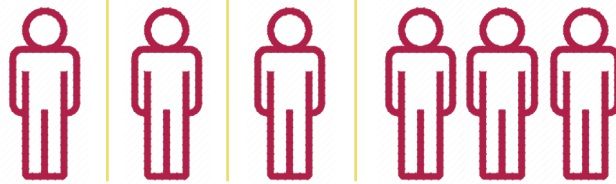
Since the outbreak of COVID-19, many have experienced increased loneliness and isolation. The **2022 Quality of Life Report** indicated that many of our communities in Aotearoa New Zealand do not feel connected.





70% of respondents consider it necessary to feel a sense of community with people in their neighbourhood.

However, only 49% of respondents agreed that they felt a sense of community with people in their neighbourhood.



50% of people responded that they have felt lonely or isolated some, most, or all the time.

Pope Francis tells us that “those living in poverty must also be involved and accompanied in a process of change and responsibility”. To break down barriers that reinforce cycles of poverty and limit opportunities for some, we all must be involved. To encounter is to walk with others, with humility. Though we cannot walk with everyone, we each can contribute what we have. We meet each other exactly where we are and encounter one other with the intent of learning and growing.

### What could you commit to for 2024 that would reduce poverty, build peace, and foster relationships in your community?

“The Book of Tobit teaches us to be realistic and practical in whatever we do with and for the poor. This is a matter of justice; it requires us to seek out and find one another, in order to foster the harmony needed for the community to feel itself as such. Caring for the poor is more than simply a matter of a hasty hand-out; it calls for reestablishing the just interpersonal relationships that poverty harms” (Pope Francis).



WORLD DAY  
OF THE POOR