

Holy Thursday – Noon Intentions 2019

Reflections by Mother John Mary of the Indwelling Trinity, CP

Dear Sisters, Christie, Anna, as we enter today into the holiest days of the Church year I wish to bring to our attention the intentions for which Pope Francis has asked us to pray. We who are at the heart of the Church here in the cloister of our monastery are deputed to pray, to intercede for the world. We should especially consider it our duty to pray for the intentions entrusted to us by Christ's Vicar, our Holy Father, Pope Francis.

In *Vultum Dei quaerere* Pope Francis told us that "Through intercessory prayer, you play a fundamental role in the life of the Church. You pray and intercede for our many brothers and sisters who are *prisoners, migrants, refugees and victims of persecution*. Your prayers of intercession embrace the many *families experiencing difficulties, the unemployed, the poor, the sick, and those struggling with addiction*, to mention just a few of the more urgent situations." Sisters, he says we "are like those who brought the paralytic to the Lord for healing (cf. Mk 2:2-12). [...] By your prayers, you can heal the wounds of many." There is a "**power and efficacy** of your [own] prayer on behalf of all humanity and the Church, especially of the *vulnerable and those in need*. Now, as then, we can conclude that the fate of humanity is decided by the prayerful hearts and uplifted hands of contemplative women."

As we have heard, Pope Francis' intention for the Way of the Cross at the coliseum this year is to highlight the suffering of those involved in human trafficking. He says this "is a crime against humanity" – in the same category as the killing of innocent children in their mother's wombs, as ethnic genocide, and other atrocities. This "ugly, evil business" brings in roughly \$150 billion dollars a year! The Sister who wrote the meditations belongs to a ministry devoted to fighting this scourge in Italy and around the world. When Mother Catherine Marie and I were in Rome the summer of 2017 and would be driving back into Rome after dusk we saw the prostitutes lining the streets. But this is not only a business in a big city like Rome. Surely, we cannot fool ourselves that it is not also happening in our city of Owensboro, and probably in Whitesville, to a lesser degree.

As we know, prostitution is just one aspect of this multi-faceted business [of human trafficking]; but it is one aspect that, for us as women who are sisters to women caught in situations like this, find most heart-rending. It has really given me pause to ponder the multi-faceted reasons women get involved in these situations. As we know, it is very rarely that a woman volunteers for this type of life-style. Pope Francis calling us to radically pray for all involved in these situations, at every level. He says that there is a power and efficacy to our prayers. Let us pray for the end of this slavery.

Often people caught in these situations, especially when these situations are such a lucrative business, feel there is no way out...that they are trapped for life. But there is. There is light and salvation for these. And we, in our life of enclosure, are with them...with those who are in a solitude that has been imposed, and with those who impose the solitude on others for their own evil ends. We pray that they too may know the healing and dramatic power of Christ and his love and mercy in their lives.

I end with another quote from VDO: "The Virgin Mary is our supreme model in the contemplation of Christ. Her Son's face belongs uniquely to her. She is the Mother and Teacher of perfect conformation to her Son; by her example and her maternal presence she sustains you, her special children, in your daily fidelity to prayer (cf. Acts 1:14)." Let us cling to our Blessed Mother during these days and ask her to give us "prayerful hearts and uplifted hands".