

Poverty as Curse; Poverty as Grace. Community for Mission in a Wounded World.

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Abstract

Poverty shows its face in the destitution of most populations in the south of the planet. But so also does a different face of poverty manifest as strongly in the inhumanity espoused by their leaders and in the 'Lords of Poverty' that collude with and over them. Bereft of dignity and humanity, both ends of the social continuum carry the disgrace of poverty. How can humanity move from this scourge of poverty and its divergent expressions? "Happy are the poor!" The grace of poverty can help us recognize the invitation of the Cosmic Christ to a new vision of humanity. Mission then is the focus on the woundedness of all creation and of all human community; it is the recognition of own poverty opening to the willingness to reach out to others in compassion, it is the invitation to human communion, a replay of the incarnation. Mission, then, is authentic human encounter. The paper explores the poverty of 'the wretched of the earth' and that of the 'Lords of poverty', uncovering the deeper poverty that characterizes a humanity in dearth of communion. Using the light of scripture and a reading of *Laudato Si*, it then rearticulates mission as the creative reconstruction of Christian communities, which have encountered the cosmic Christ and receive the grace and true wealth of poverty.