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Audio of Prelate: Sheltering the Homeless

A new audio from the Prelate in the monthly series on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

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Translation of the Prelate's audio recording is found below.

To listen to the 8-minute audio in Spanish click [here](#).

I was a stranger and you welcomed me. Those who heard Christ speak these words knew very well the dangers threatening those who ventured out on the roads: thieves, wild animals, adverse weather conditions and other hazards. Mary and Joseph also experienced the helplessness of being homeless when Christ came into the world. One after another, the doors of Bethlehem were closed to them. Only a stable would welcome our new-born God. Later on the Holy Family, pursued by King Herod, fled into exile in a foreign country, taking hardly anything with them in their haste.

The Holy Father said, “Jesus introduces us to these works of mercy in his preaching so that we can know whether or not we are living as his disciples.” So it is fitting that we ask God in our prayer: Why is it, Lord, that you invite us to give

shelter to the homeless? What do you want to teach us?

To shelter the homeless is to welcome the stranger; it is to make room in our safe and stable world for those who need help; it is to offer protection to those being threatened, risking our own comfort for their sake, sharing our well-being and giving up part of the tranquil life we enjoy, and doing all this with external and internal joy.

In recent months, we have been pained to see every day thousands of people struggling desperately and even losing their lives in the attempt to achieve a more dignified existence in a country or continent other than their own. This is nothing new in the world, but recent social inequalities and wars have reached such levels that neither the sea nor any other natural boundary can now contain this flow of migrants.

The stranger is now no longer a distant figure, but instead is increasingly present in the streets of our cities. The Pope said that if we look at the painful journey of these families with indifference, “we have lost the sense of fraternal responsibility.”

Societies that have grown for centuries with the warmth of Christianity now face this great challenge. Therefore I dare to say that we will find the capacity to welcome all those who have been forced to emigrate only if we all strive to live each day with Christ’s charity. That mercy (which so often in the past brought consolation to these people in their homelands, through missionaries, religious men and women, and also many other people of good will to whom we should be very thankful) will inspire now the creativity of many people.

Various initiatives will be needed to distribute among everyone the well-being they require, with jobs, homes, education, etc. We realize very well that this is not just an economic problem, but above all a moral one, because when a brother or sister demands justice, Christians need to respond also with charity.

In the Gospel we see how our Lord enjoyed the hospitality of many of his friends as he preached throughout Judea and Galilee. And for those who opened the doors of their homes, Jesus transformed their lives.

Martha, Mary and Lazarus shared in the Redeemer's friendship; Simon the Pharisee learned the value of forgiveness; Zacchaeus left behind his selfish life. In our own times, Christ continues looking for friends to welcome Him in migrants or the displaced.

You and I can shelter our Lord in our souls every day, when we receive the Holy Eucharist. Let us each consider: what kind of hospitality do we give to the Redeemer? Do we prepare our heart well like those people in the Gospel prepared their homes before the Master's arrival? What small signs of affection do we show our Divine Guest?

In speaking now about the Eucharist, we are not digressing from the topic of mercy, since only a heart that strives to love Christ more each day will be able to welcome a brother who needs help, work, or simply special attention.

If we put care into our Communion, our Lord will make us more generous, more sensitive to the suffering of others, more available to offer our material means and time to those who lack the care they need.

Saint Josemaría also suffered the trial of having to flee and seek shelter. Because of the religious persecution in Spain in 1936, he had to take refuge for long periods of time in various places throughout Madrid, in attics and tiny rooms, and other strange places. And if he thought the people who had taken him in would not denounce him, he would reveal his status as a priest. Without fearing to place his life in danger, he would offer them the possibility of the sacraments, such as Confession or the Eucharist, true consolations in those difficult months. Thus, amid the hatred and fear of wartime, Christ made his way once again into the hearts of those people.

Before ending this dialogue with you, let us ask our Lady and Saint Joseph, strangers in Bethlehem and migrants in Egypt, to teach us to open the door of our life to Christ, who is asking us

to be generous towards those who need to be welcomed.

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