**“Those who lead the many to justice shall be like the stars forever.”**

* Daniel 12:3

February 20 has served to focus the world’s attention on issues of justice since 2007 when the United Nations General Assembly set this date as the World Day of Social Justice. Social justice is embraced across religious and secular traditions as an underlying principle that promotes peaceful relationship between people. Social justice is also central to Catholic Social Teaching, placing sin and grace in their social context. Today we call to mind those who are kept from full human flourishing by the injustices of society and how we are all called to work for solutions.

**Reflection:**

*Some of you said: this system can no longer be endured. We must change it; we must put human dignity again at the center and on that pillar build the alternative social structures we need. It must be done with courage, but also with intelligence, with tenacity but without fanaticism, with passion but without violence. And among us all, addressing the conflicts without being trapped in them, always seeking to resolve the tensions to reach a higher plane of unity, peace and justice. We, Christians, have something very lovely, a guide of action, we could say a revolutionary program. I earnestly recommend that you read it, that you read the Beatitudes that are in chapter 5 of Saint Matthew and 6 of Saint Luke (cf. Matthew 5:3 and Luke 6:20) and that you read the passage of Matthew 25. I said it to the young people at Rio de Janeiro, with those two things you have the plan of action.*

* Pope Francis, 28 October 2014, World Meeting of Popular Movements

(over)

**Prayer:**

God of justice and mercy, we ask your blessing upon those trapped by the world’s sin

For those who live in the terror of war …

*Place peace in the hearts of those carrying out violence*

For those who live shackled and trafficked …

*Grow mercy in the hearts of those who hold them captive*

For those who bear the weight of poverty …

*Create generosity in the hearts of those who can help bear the weight*

For those whose life and livelihood are affected by our changing climate …

*Place prudence in the hearts of those in positions of power*

For those who continue to be pushed to the margins of society – the elderly, immigrants, addicted …

*Grow compassion in the hearts of those who might welcome them into its center*

And for all of us, grant the strength to continue working for justice in this world and the faith to believe in the justice of the world yet to come.

Amen.