



SPECIAL PRAYER SERVICE FEAST OF BLESSED LAURA VICUÑA

Reader:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness,
for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Today we celebrate the solemn feast of Blessed Laura Vicuña. She is a great model for young people not only during her time but as well as today. Her life speaks so much of the aspirations, dreams, goals and even sufferings of our young people in the present age. Her whole life though very short was fully lived in love for God and for her neighbor. Hers was a holy life born out of much suffering and offering. She dedicated her life for the conversion and salvation of her own mother. Her entire life was patterned in the very life of Jesus who suffered death for our own salvation.

Blessed Laura Vicuña was born on April 5, 1891 and died on January 22, 1904. She was canonized as blessed by the Roman Catholic Church and is the patron of abuse victims.

SONG: **WE ARE GOD'S CHILDREN (Papal Visit Theme Song)**

Leader:

We heard the message of Pope Francis to the children and to us. A young girl questioned: "WHY DOES GOD ALLOW CHILDREN TO BECOME PROSTITUTES?" Look out for this fact: she is the only one who has put a question for which there is no answer. She couldn't put it into words but expressed it with tears. As I said, the heart of your question has no reply. Only when we too can cry about the things you said can we come close to answering that question. Why do children suffer so much? Why do children suffer? When the heart is able to ask itself and weep, then we can understand something. There is a worldly compassion which is useless. You expressed something like this. It's a compassion that makes us put our hands in our pockets and give something to the poor. But if Christ had had that kind of compassion he would have greeted a couple of people, given them something, and walked on. But it was only when he was able to cry that he understood something of our lives.

Dear young boys and girls, today's world doesn't know how to cry. The emarginated people, those left to one side, are crying. Those who are discarded are crying. But we don't understand much about these people in need. Certain realities of life we only see through eyes cleansed by our tears. I invite each one here to ask yourself: have I learned how to weep? Have I learned how to weep for the emarginated or for a street child who has a drug problem or for an abused child? Unfortunately there are those who cry because they want something else.

This is the first thing I want to say: let us learn how to weep as she has shown us today and let us not forget this lesson. The great question of why so many children suffer, she did this in tears. The response that we can make today is: let us really learn how to weep.

GOSPEL READING: John 11:32- 43

³² When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. ³⁴ "Where have you laid him?" he asked.

"Come and see, Lord," they replied.

³⁵ Jesus wept.

³⁶ Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

³⁷ But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. ³⁹ "Take away the stone," he said.

"But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days."

⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"

⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

Leader:

In the Gospel, Jesus cried for his dead friend, he cried in his heart for the family who lost its child, for the poor widow who had to bury her son. He was moved to tears and compassion when he saw the crowds without a pastor. If you don't learn how to cry, you cannot be a good Christian. This is a challenge. When they posed this question to us, why children suffer, why this or that tragedy occurs in life – our response must be either silence or a word that is born of our tears. Be courageous, don't be afraid to cry.

SONG: YOU RAISE ME UP

SILENCE FOR REFLECTION (with background music)

Recall any experience with a poor/abused child. It could be your friend, family member, relative, or a child from the streets. What was your encounter like? What did you talk about? Did you cry after that encounter? What is God telling you through that experience? *(if there is time you can have a short group sharing)*

OUR FATHER

(Together, as we all remember those children who are suffering, let us lift our prayers to our Merciful and Compassionate Father)

CLOSING PRAYER:

PRAYER FOR THE LOST, THE LEAST AND THE LAST THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF BLESSED LAURA VICUÑA

God of endless love, ever caring, ever strong, always present, always just:
You gave your only Son to save us by the blood of his cross especially the little ones.
Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace, join to your own suffering the pain of all who have been hurt in body, mind, and spirit by those who betrayed the trust placed in them.

Through the powerful intercession of your servant Blessed Laura Vicuña, our model and friend, Hear our cries as we agonize over the harm done to our brothers and sisters, the children who are on the streets, marginalized, exploited, abused, trafficked, and those in great danger. Breathe wisdom into our prayers, soothe restless hearts with hope, steady shaken spirits with faith: Show us the way to justice and wholeness, enlightened by truth and enfolded in your mercy.

Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts, heal your people's wounds and transform our brokenness. Grant us courage and wisdom, humility and grace, so that we may act with justice and find peace in you. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

SONG: [YOUR HEART TODAY](#)

Blessed Laura Vicuña, pray for us!