

# origins

CNS documentary service

## Lenten Message 2014

Pope Francis

*Courageously follow Jesus in seeking out the poor and sinners, and in making difficult sacrifices in order to help and heal others, Pope Francis said. Christians are called to confront the material, spiritual and moral destitution of "our brothers and sisters, to touch it, to make it our own and to take practical steps to alleviate it," the pope said in a message for Lent, which begins March 5 for Latin-rite Catholics. Saving the world will not come about "with the right kind of human resources" and token alms, but only "through the poverty of Christ," who emptied himself of the worldly and made the world rich with God's love and mercy, he said. Released by the Vatican Feb. 4, the text of the pope's message focused on the*

*"God alone can truly save and free us. The Gospel is the real antidote to spiritual destitution."*

*theme of Christ's poverty, with the title: "He became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich," which is from a verse from St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians. Pope Francis said he chose the passage to explore what St. Paul's references to poverty and charity mean for Christians today. There are many forms of poverty, he said, like the material destitution that disfigures the face of humanity and the moral destitution of being a slave to vice and sin. But "there is only one real kind of poverty: not living as children of God and brothers and sisters of Christ," he said. The pope's message follows, copyright © 2014 by Libreria Editrice Vaticana.*

**a**s Lent draws near, I would like to offer some helpful thoughts on our path of conversion as individuals and as a community. These insights are inspired by the words of St. Paul: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor 8:9).

The apostle was writing to the Christians of Corinth to encourage them to be generous in helping the faithful in Jerusalem, who were in need. What do these words of St. Paul mean for us Christians today? What does this invitation to poverty, a life of evangelical poverty, mean to us today?

### Christ's Grace

First of all, it shows us how God works. He  
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