

Pope Francis' Prayer Intention: February 2018

Say “No” to Corruption

Pray that people with power have the strength to make good choices.

Once upon a time, a girl lived in a fancy home with her stepmother and stepsisters. Sadly, the girl lived in a tiny little servant's room and slaved all day long for her stepfamily. She wore rags while the others wore expensive gowns. After preparing elegant dinner parties for the household, she would scrape together a few beans and eat alone in the kitchen.

One day the girl met a king who fell in love with her goodness. The girl was ashamed of her rags, though, so she ran away from the king. As she ran, one of her shoes fell off. The king had every lady in the kingdom try on the shoe until he found the girl again.

That story might sound familiar to you. It's the story of Cinderella. For thousands of years, people around the world have admired Cinderella because she is patient, kind, and brave.

In most versions of the tale, Cinderella is a servant who has no freedom. The person who has power over her is her stepmother. The stepmother is rich, but she forces Cinderella to dress in rags and eat scraps. The stepmother is *corrupt*, meaning she uses her power to hurt others instead of help them.

Pope Francis asks us to pray for an end to corruption. God uses our prayers to send his help to people who are tempted to lie, steal, or hurt others. Our prayers strengthen their hearts to consider good choices. As we pray, our hearts become stronger too.

Let's pray together:

God, you are Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You know best how to share love.

Please send your love to people with power over others; help them to be kind and generous.

Think about it!

- What is your favorite story?
- How do stories help us learn right from wrong?
- How can praying help you make good choices?

Nurturing Activity: Seed Experiment

This experiment will help you see how good choices *nurture*, or make things grow in healthy ways.

What you need:

- An empty egg carton or some paper cups—mark half of the compartments or cups with an “N” for “nurtured” and the other half “C” for “corrupt”
- A little potting soil
- At least four seeds (try basil, beans, marigolds, or any other fast-growing seeds)
- A safe place by a sunny window

What you do:

- Fill the egg carton or cups with potting soil
- Gently push one seed into each compartment or cup
- Corrupt Seeds:
 - Interfere with the “Corrupt” seeds by withholding water, blocking the sunlight, or putting unhealthy items in with the seeds (like dish soap)
- Nurtured Seeds:
 - Each day, check on the “Nurtured” seeds, moistening the soil with just enough water and giving them sunlight

Keep notes or draw pictures to record what happens each day. At the end of a week or so, you should be able to see how much healthier things grow when they are not corrupt, but nurtured.

“Thorns and snares are on the path of the crooked;
those who would safeguard their lives will avoid them.
Train the young in the way they should go;
even when old, they will not swerve from it.”

Proverbs 22:5-6