

## Reflection on -

### Sustainable Development Goal 10: *Reduce inequality within and among countries*

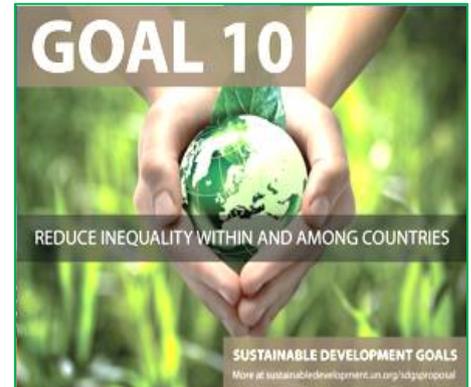
This goal targets the oppressed and marginalised people of the world. For example, one SDG 10 target is as follows:

*By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic status.*

Gathering Song: 'Come to Me' - [www.liamlawton.com](http://www.liamlawton.com)

(Or a song of your choice).

See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CaU6TUedWX0>



### Two Scenarios

**Scenario 1:** Tendayi is a seven-year-old girl living in Mbare, a high-density area of Harare, Zimbabwe. She lives in a one-room cabin with her widowed mother and four siblings. Her mother works as a vendor selling vegetables at the market near the bus terminus. Her meagre income is barely sufficient to provide food for the family but does not stretch to school fees for the children. So Tendayi carries a heavy basket of fruit on her head and competes with the other vendors while helping her mother. An NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation) agrees to pay school fees for one of the children and her brother is chosen, as boys usually get preference when there is an opportunity for education. It is almost inevitable that Tendayi and her sisters will marry young and fall prey to the on-going pattern of poverty and inequality.



**Scenario 2:** Emily is a seven-year-old girl living in the suburbs of an Irish city. Her mother is also a widow and like Tendayi, Emily has one brother and three sisters. Her mother is in receipt of Social Welfare payments which enable her to provide for her family. Education is free and books and transport are provided for those who cannot afford them. Emily is involved in some extra-curricular activities such as music and sports. She has every opportunity to make the most of her situation and if she works hard, she will have a career and be able to choose what she wants in life.



**The stories above illustrate the difference between opportunities that are available in rich and poorer countries.**

Equality and non-discrimination has long been a cornerstone principle of international human rights law. Tackling inequalities (of opportunity and outcome) and discrimination (direct and indirect), is crucial to move towards the full realization of human rights.

Extreme economic inequality is causing growing public outrage around the world. According to the OECD, income inequality is at its highest level for the past half century. The average income of the richest 10% of the population is about nine times that of the poorest 10% across the OECD countries, up from seven times 25 years ago. Inequality is closely linked with challenges such as poverty, environmental degradation, persistent unemployment, political instability, violence and conflict. Several factors - economic, social, cultural and institutional, need to be tackled to promote more inclusive progress for those who have been left behind.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjIXbjC0Xv8>

<HTTP://CORPORATE-CITIZENSHIP.COM/2015/08/10/SDG-NUMBER-10-REDUCING-INEQUALITY-WITHIN-AND-AMONG-COUNTRIES/>

Pope Francis is very concerned that contemporary capitalist systems create an 'economy of exclusion'. By this he means that full participation in capitalism is limited to the few and only a small minority can enjoy its benefits. For evidence of this, one need look no further than the widespread inequality in many 'developed' countries.

See: *'Why Pope Francis won't tolerate inequality in America'*. Matthew Schmalz (2015)

<http://fortune.com/2015/09/20/pope-francis-income-inequality/>

### Pause for Reflection

**Word of God:** James 2: 1 – 9

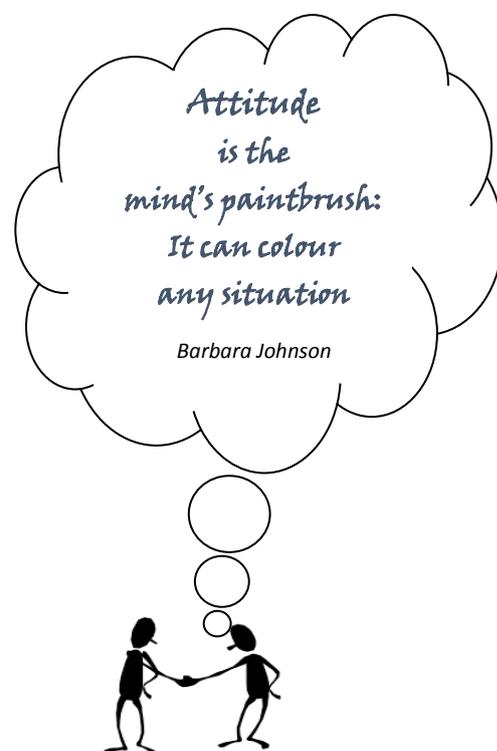
### Questions for reflection and sharing:

- What is stirring in my heart as I reflect on the scenarios and the reading from St. James?
- How do I feel challenged in my own attitudes?
- How are we challenged to address inequalities in our own settings?

### Concluding Prayer

O God of the poor,  
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,  
so precious in your eyes.  
Bring healing to our lives,  
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,  
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.  
Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain  
at the expense of the poor and the earth.  
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing  
to be filled with awe and contemplation,  
to recognise that we are profoundly united with every creature  
as we journey towards your infinite light.  
We thank you for being with us each day.  
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle  
for justice, love and peace.

*Pope Francis, 'Laudato Si'*



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