Tools for Educating and Advocating on Poverty and Unemployment

February 14, 2012

2012 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering

Faithful Citizenship:
Protecting Human Life and Dignity, Promoting the Common Good

Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
catholicsocialministrygathering.org
Poverty

**Catholic Social Teaching on Poverty, an Option for the Poor, and the Common Good**

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**God is Love (Deus Caritas Est)**  
Pope Benedict XVI, 2005

“... love for widows and orphans, prisoners, and the sick and needy of every kind, is as essential to [the Church] as the ministry of the sacraments and preaching of the Gospel. The Church cannot neglect the service of charity any more than she can neglect the Sacraments and the Word” (no. 22).

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**A Place at the Table:**  
*A Catholic Recommitment to Overcome Poverty and to Respect the Dignity of All God’s Children*  
U.S. Catholic Bishops, 2002

“The Catholic way is to recognize the essential role and the complementary responsibilities of families, communities, the market, and government to work together to overcome poverty and advance human dignity” (p. 18).

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In 2010...

- the poverty rate in America was **15.1 percent**...
- **20.4 million people** lived in deep poverty...
- **1/3 of the country’s total population**...
- **46.2 million people**  
  less than **$11,000/year**  
  lived in or near poverty (less than twice the poverty level)
Poverty

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*In 2010...*

- the poverty rate in America was **16.0** percent...
- **16.2** million people lived in deep poverty...
- **1/2** of the country’s total population...

- **49.1** million people
  - less than **$12,150**/year
  - lived in or near poverty (less than twice the poverty level)
Poverty

Distribution of People by Ratio of Resources to Poverty Threshold: 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ratio of Resources to Poverty Threshold</th>
<th>Official**</th>
<th>SPM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 or more</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 to 3.99</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 to 1.99</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5 to 0.99</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less than 0.5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unemployment

Blessed John Paul II

“The obligation to provide unemployment benefits, that is to say, the duty to make suitable grants indispensable for the subsistence of unemployed workers and their families, is a duty springing from the fundamental principle of the moral order in this sphere, namely the principle of the common use of goods or, to put it in another and still simpler way, the right to life and subsistence.”

Laborem Exercens, No. 18

Pope Benedict XVI

No consideration of the problems associated with development could fail to highlight the direct link between poverty and unemployment. In many cases, poverty results from a violation of the dignity of human work, either because work opportunities are limited (through unemployment or underemployment), or “because a low value is put on work and the rights that flow from it, especially the right to a just wage and to the personal security of the worker and his or her family.

Caritas In Veritate, No. 63

- 23.8 million unemployed/underemployed (real rate 15.1%)
- Average length of joblessness is 10 months
- 4 job seekers for every 1 job opening
- Great amount of jobs created in recovery have been low-income
Our Framework (Dolan letter)

Preach

Educate

Advocate

Homily helps

Prayers

Bulletin materials

Lenten resources – new!

Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship parish resources

USCCB Unemployment and Poverty Resources Page
ADVOCATE - Resources from the U/P webpage

USCCB Unemployment and Poverty Resources Page
USCCB Legislative Action Center

[Image of the USCCB Legislative Action Center website]

1. The nation needs to substantially reduce future deficits, but not at the expense of hungry and poor people.

2. Funding focused on reducing poverty should not be cut. It should be made as effective as possible, but not cut.

3. We urge our leaders to protect and improve poverty-focused development and humanitarian assistance to promote a better, safer world.

4. National leaders must review and consider tax revenues, military spending, and entitlements in the search for ways to share sacrifice and cut deficits.

5. A fundamental task is to create jobs and spur economic growth. Decent jobs at decent wages are the best path out of poverty, and restoring growth is a powerful way to reduce deficits.

6. The budget debate has a central moral dimension. Christians are asking how we protect "the least of these." "What would Jesus cut?" "How do we share sacrifice?"

7. As believers, we turn to God with prayer and fasting, to ask for guidance as our nation makes decisions about our priorities as a people.

8. God continues to shower our nation and the world with blessings. As Christians, we are rooted in the love of God in Jesus Christ. Our task is to share these blessings with love and justice and with a special priority for those who are poor.
ADVOCATE via E-Notes

- Notes for Neighbors transmitted tri-weekly
  - Subscribe HERE

- GradNet sent bi-weekly to JustFaith graduates

- JPHD semi-annual reports on what our advocacy has accomplished
ADVOCATE-Faith Advocates for Jobs

- faithadvocatesforjobs.wordpress.com/
- Congregation-level support to jobless
- Policy Advocacy
- Interfaith
TEACH - Poverty USA Facebook

http://www.facebook.com/povertyusa

Poverty USA
Non-Profit Organization • Washington, District of Columbia

Right now, nearly one in six of us lives in Poverty USA. Worse yet, one in five children. Join CCMD in helping low-income people move themselves up and out of Poverty USA. Learn about community programs that break the cycle of poverty, improve communities, support self-sufficiency and encourage independence.

SIGN UP for action alerts

Daily Tip
Organize a letter-writing campaign for elected officials. They work!

Tour Poverty USA
Living in Poverty USA

What's life like at the poverty line?

Poverty USA
We can end it.
TEACH - Resources from the U/P webpage

USCCB Unemployment and Poverty Resources Page

- CST Primers
- Pastoral Statements
- Partner Resources
- Other USCCCB departments
TEACH-First Friday for Food Security

- Facebook event
- Multi-office USCCB collaboration
- Intended for individual and family use
- Raises awareness
- Incorporates prayer and action
TEACH - Catholics Confront Global Poverty

- Partnership with Catholic Relief Services
- www.crs.org/globalpoverty
- Seamless concern for human family experiencing domestic and global poverty
- Complex realities of U.S. and international policies on people in poverty
Stack the Deck

- Popular education approach to sobering material
- See issues differently
- Effective adult methodology
- Reflect – analyze – discuss
Q and A

- How could JPHD better assist you?
- Webinars? If so, what topics?
- More liturgical, prayer or formation resources?
- Other?