

Info Alert 142

March 13, 2018

*"True compassion recognizes that a society that creates beggars
needs to be **totally restructured.**"*

-Anne Braden in Sojourners (3/6/18)

Education: Hunger/Poverty

Poverty violates Catholic Social Teaching which insists that everyone has a right to live in dignity. Catholic Social Justice supports an economy that puts **people, not profits**, at the center. Pope Leo XIII stressed, "To exercise pressure upon the indigent and the destitute for the sake of gain, and to gather one's profit out of the need of another, is condemned by all laws, human and divine."

Again and again, we read statistics that indicate that **poverty begets hunger**. Clearly, poverty is the main factor contributing to hunger in the U.S. and abroad. Other factors causing hunger, but **none greater than poverty**, include: food shortage and waste, poor infrastructure, unstable markets, climate change, war and conflict, and nutritional quality.

Bishop Kicanas of the Tucson Diocese states that every minute "17 people in the world die from hunger, 13 of whom are children." **Structural change challenges us**. We are privileged right now to be advocates for those who have no voice.

Budgets are moral documents. The president's proposed budget is an unconscionable attack on the poor with handouts for the super-rich and defense contractors. How does it attack the poor?

Facts: It would cut SNAP benefits--already only \$1.40 per person per meal--by more than a quarter. It suggests that low-income families should eat by replacing already-meager food stamps with a box of processed or canned food. (Matthews, *Vox*, 2/12/18) This is an effort to cut the number of people on SNAP, yet the Urban Institute released a study showing that 8.4 million fewer people were living in poverty in 2015 due to SNAP benefits; the number of children in poverty dropped by 28%. In 2016 alone, the Census Bureau's Supplemental Poverty measure credits SNAP with lifting 3.6 million Americans out of poverty.

Food insecurity related illnesses show the enormous cost of hunger. Serving healthy breakfasts and lunches, as well as summer food service programs is vital to the well-being of students living in food-insecure households across the nation. (Facts from FRAC, Food Research and Action Center)

Prayer: God, you create the heavens and the earth for all, yet many build barriers, walls, fences.

Help us to embrace a culture of encounter. May we learn from the poor valuable lessons of life, recognizing they are often our teachers, helping us to live our faith more consistently. May we learn from the poor's abilities to trust and their readiness to receive help, how to live simply.

May we grow in our conviction that sharing with the poor allows us to understand the deepest truth of the Gospel. Amen.

- Action:**
1. Help change oppressive structures by calling your members of congress about the budget elements that attack the poor (see above.) **1-202-224-3121**
 2. Commend Acme for planning a "Walk Against Hunger" for Saturday, 4/21 @ 10 a.m.
 3. March is Ntl. Nutrition Month. Reflect and share on some "What if . . ." questions, e.g., What if all moms had access to safe, affordable and nutritious foods?
What if all moms had the support of programs and policies to ensure their children get a healthy start in life?

*Good handouts on Immigration from Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (cliniclegal.org)
Phila. Diocese receives and supports new refugees and is always looking for support for them.
For more information, check with S. Rose Patrice Kuhn (rpkuhnihm@yahoo.com)*

Next Info Alert: Tuesday, April 17

