

The Episcopal Public Policy Network

The Church in the World: Looking to the Future

Securing Economic Justice in a Global Crisis

"This is what makes caring for the body a Christian work, that through its health and comfort we may be able to work, to acquire, and lay by funds with which to aid those who are in need, that in this way the strong member may serve the weaker, and we may be sons of God, each caring for and working for the other, bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ. This is a truly Christian life. Here faith is truly active through love."
--Martin Luther, **A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians**

The U.S. economy is experiencing one of the worst recessions in decades, exacerbating long-standing problems like hunger and homelessness for the poorest in society and income inequality, decreasing living standards, stagnating wages and benefits, and increasing mortgage and credit card debt for working families. We - individuals, parishes, and dioceses - are all being called to find new ways to "aid those in need."

In May of 2008, the Presiding Bishop held a Summit on Domestic Poverty. Episcopal advocacy and service organizations spanning the breadth of the Church, along with representatives of our ecumenical partners, focused solely on the issues of domestic poverty. They recognized both the work that is being done on a daily basis by the Church and the need for new and innovative strategies for better collaboration and response.

It is during these dire economic times that our faith calls us to rectify the economic injustices that have long plagued those who have not benefited from previous years of growth and prosperity. The Gospels bear witness to the call that has been placed on people of faith to provide food for the

<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/eppn>

hungry, drink for the thirsty, welcome to the stranger, clothes to the naked, and visits to the prisoner (Matthew 25:35-36). We are called to raise our voices on behalf of those in need, to advocate for an economy that serves all of the people, and for economic decisions that create shared prosperity for the many.

The Episcopal Church has long-standing policy on poverty issues through resolutions passed at General Convention and Executive Council, urging the Church to minister to the poor and to advocate on their behalf. You can find these resolutions at the Episcopal Church Archives:

<http://www.episcopalarchives.org>.

Lenten Discipline: Sharing Your Abundance

This week commit to finding a way to aid in the provision of resources to meet the basic human needs of those suffering under the throes of economic distress. You can do one or all of the following:

- **Advocate.** Write or meet with your local, state, and federal policymakers and let them know what's going on in your community. Are homeless shelters overcrowded? Is the line at your food pantry or soup kitchen longer than ever? There is nothing like your own personal story or an experience in your neighborhood or parish to highlight the issues of economic injustice.
- **Donate.** If you have a little extra income, donate to a local food bank. A \$25 dollar donation – that's just a latte a day for a week - can fund the preparation of 175 meals.
- **Volunteer.** Volunteer with an existing group to examine the needs in your community and how they might better be met. If such a group doesn't exist, help organize one. You could also volunteer at your local Jubilee Ministry Center, a food bank or a homeless shelter. Increasing demands for emergency food assistance and shelter require additional hands to serve those in need.

<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/eppn>