



Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City Prayer and Action Network

PROVEN POVERTY FIGHTERS: Fifty years ago this January, our nation came together to declare a War on Poverty. President Lyndon B. Johnson put our national commitment into reality with the creation of Head Start and other programs serving low-income families. Later in 1964, he signed the Economic Opportunity Act, which created Community Action Agencies, Job Corps, VISTA, and other programs to fight poverty. In the same era, we also saw broadly shared economic growth and the creation of vital programs serving our most vulnerable, including Medicaid, Medicare, and the permanent food stamp program.

Since then, we've seen the importance of these services in cutting poverty and creating greater economic opportunity. While we recognize that there is still more work to do to better serve low-income families, some policymakers are already looking to use the anniversary as another opportunity to make the case that essential programs helping families pay bills and put food on the table should be cut.

We must be ready for the national conversation that will ensue in January around this important anniversary. As Pope Benedict reminded us, "Poverty is a plague against which humanity must fight without cease." Pope Francis sends us on our mission: "A way has to be found to enable everyone to benefit from the fruits of the earth, and not simply to close the gap between the affluent and those who must be satisfied with the crumbs falling from the table." Rather, there must immediately commence "a new stimulus to international activity on behalf of the poor, inspired by something more than mere goodwill, or, worse, promises which all too often have not been kept."

What can you do? Get informed: Visit <http://halfinten.org/issues/articles/interactive-map-2012-poverty-data-by-congressional-district/> to see poverty statistics by Utah congressional district.

Give: Catholic Community Services and Holy Cross Ministries provide important services to those in most need—donations of money or specific items are welcome—visit their websites for more information: www.ccsutah.org or www.hcmutah.org

Give globally: Catholic Relief Services save millions of lives every year through proven programs that not only help those in need, but give them the tools needed to help themselves. Visit www.crs.org to learn more and donate

Join: The Catholics Confront Global Poverty campaign of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops provides information, action alerts, prayers and more. Visit www.confrontglobalpoverty.org and sign up for their email alerts.

Call or email: As always, our congressmen need to hear from Catholics about our priorities. Contact your representative and senators early and often regarding cuts to food stamps, immigration reform, and the next round of budget battles. Our bottom line on each of these issues is the same—the measure of our society is how it treats the poor and vulnerable. Leaving migrants to die in the desert or deporting them back to life-threatening situations, balancing budgets on the backs of the poor, and cutting food or foreign assistance for the most needy are not acceptable policies for a moral society. Contact information for the delegation can be found at <http://governor.utah.gov/goca/representatives.html>.

GREEN TIP OF THE WEEK: Instead of putting your leaves, branches, and weeds into plastic bags only to be picked up by trash collectors, consider turning this lawn "waste" into nutrient-rich soil ready for your spring garden! Collecting compost is quite easy and can save money on soil and fertilizer when it comes time to start your garden after the cold season. Almost everything in your yard is compostable (grass and plant clippings, leaves, dead or brown weeds), except for weeds that have seeds or pernicious weeds (i.e. ivy) that can withstand composting. Mix in some of your kitchen waste as well – fruit and vegetable peels, teabags, and coffee grinds – to increase your yield.

PRAYER: Say this prayer at mealtime this week:

Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts:

The gift of food, for us and for others;

Of generosity, that when we have plenty

None should go hungry the whole world over;

The gift of hearts that grow in humility and compassion

For each of your children who suffers misfortune;

The gift of your love that extends our reach,

And would not deny your gifts to another.

Through Christ, Our Lord. **Amen.**

Source: Catholics Confront Global Poverty