



Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City Prayer and Action Network

FIGHTING POVERTY: Not so long ago, Pope Francis reminded all Catholics of the dangers of indifference to the poor and the suffering of others. Last week, the House of Representatives narrowly passed harsh cuts that will deny food stamps (SNAP) to at least 4 million people. The House of Representatives also passed a temporary spending bill that would continue painful cuts in housing, education, senior meals, unemployment benefits, and would stop funding for the Affordable Care Act. This same week, we learned that

- Poverty has grown tremendously since 2008, which was the first full year of the Great Recession. 6.7 million more people in poverty. Disproportionate poverty among those with little education, among children and people of color.
- At 9.4%, unemployment was much higher in 2012 than it was in the deep recession year of 2008 (6.4%), although it declined from 2011 to 2012.
- Inequality has widened since the Great Recession (and for a lot longer, too).
- On the other hand, SNAP/food stamps helped 4 million people out of poverty, and there are fewer uninsured people.

The House spending bill will go to the Senate, which will send back a bill without the de-funding of the Affordable Care Act. If the House rejects that, a government shutdown looks more likely. Meanwhile, we must remember that, while we may not be rich by American standards, we are comfortable and dine well each day compared to the vast majority of our fellow humans on the planet. An income of \$35,000 puts a person within the global 1% today, according to World Bank economist Branko Milanovic.

In other words, we have means, we have a voice, and we are required by our faith to speak out on behalf of those who otherwise will not be heard.

What can you do? Visit <http://www.povertyusa.org/> to learn more about poverty in America to prepare your arguments to the Senate regarding the House bills.

Call Gov. Herbert (801) 538-1000 and ask him to support full Medicaid Expansion in Utah to provide health care for thousands of working individuals in the state who do not otherwise qualify for health insurance. Visit www.utahnsforthemedicaidexpansion.org for more information.

Learn even more:

The Refugee Experience Book Club, hosted by Utah Refugee Services, discusses books that explore the harrowing journeys of refugees. For Oct., the club will screen the film "Half the Sky" and discuss the book of the same name. The Club will meet Oct. 1 from 7-9 p.m. at the West Jordan Library, Viridian Center (8030 South 1825 West). For more information, contact Amy Wylie at URS 801-943-4636 or awylie@utah.gov

Attend a free screening of the movie "Playground." The sexual exploitation of children is a problem that we tend to relegate to back-alley brothels in developing countries, the province of a particularly inhuman, and invariably foreign, criminal element. Such is the initial premise of Libby Spears' sensitive investigation into the topic. But she quickly concludes that very little thrives on this planet without American capital, and the commercial child sex industry is certainly thriving. Libby Spears will be present to discuss the film and audience questions, along with other panel members from the community. The screening takes place Oct. 10 from 6-8 p.m. at the University of Utah College of

Social Work, Goodwill building (395 South 1500 East). For more information, contact Irene M. Ota at the U (801)-581-8455 or Irene.ota@socwk.utah.edu

GREEN TIP OF THE WEEK: Automatic paper towel dispensers in public bathrooms are designed to minimize waste by providing a preset length of towel, but many of us run the machine 2 or 3 times to get enough towels to actually dry our hands. Try this instead—take the towel provided and fold it in half before drying your hands. It is surprising how much better the single towel works with this simple trick.

PRAYER: Most gracious God,

who gives the fruits of the earth for the benefit of all your creatures, we give thanks to you for abundant harvests and plentiful production on this earth.

We pray for those in our land who are denied these gifts, and seek your forgiveness for our complicity in their want.

We pray for those whose voices are not heard and for those who do not hear.

Forgive us when our choices are selfish ones, and forgive us especially when we do not choose to raise our own voice against the pain of our brothers and sisters who suffer needless want.

Most of all, O God, we give you thanks for the revelation of your love in Jesus Christ, who came that everyone might have abundant life. Amen.

Pax Christi USA