

My Brothers and Sisters Kitchen

"Faith in action is love, and love in action is service" - St Teresa of Calcutta

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops – Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment ([Mt 25:31-46](#)) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

"The Church's love for the poor . . . is a part of her constant tradition." This love is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, of the poverty of Jesus, and of his concern for the poor. . . . "Those who are oppressed by poverty are the object of a preferential love on the part of the Church which, since her origin and in spite of the failings of many of her members, has not ceased to work for their relief, defense, and liberation."

The primary purpose of this special commitment to the poor is to enable them to become active participants in the life of society. It is to enable all persons to share in and contribute to the common good. The "option for the poor," therefore, is not an adversarial slogan that pits one group or class against another. Rather it states that the deprivation and powerlessness of the poor wounds the whole community. The extent of their suffering is a measure of how far we are from being a true community of persons. These wounds will be healed only by greater solidarity with the poor and among the poor themselves. (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, [Economic Justice for All](#), no. 88)

The needs of the poor take priority over the desires of the rich; the rights of workers over the maximization of profits; the preservation of the environment over uncontrolled industrial expansion; the production to meet social needs over production for military purposes. (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, [Economic Justice for All](#), no. 94)

In teaching us charity, the Gospel instructs us in the preferential respect due to the poor and the special situation they have in society: the more fortunate should renounce some of their rights so as to place their goods more generously at the service of others. (Blessed Paul VI, *A Call to Action* [[Octogesima Adveniens](#)], no. 23)

Faced with a world today where so many people are suffering from want, the council asks individuals and governments to remember the saying of the Fathers: "Feed the people dying of hunger, because if you do not feed them you are killing them," and it urges them according to their ability to share and dispose of their goods to help others, above all by giving them aid which will enable them to help and develop themselves. (Second Vatican Council, *The Church in the Modern World* [[Gaudium et Spes](#)], no. 69)

Still, when there is a question of defending the rights of individuals, the poor and badly off have a claim to especial consideration. The richer class have many ways of shielding themselves, and stand less in need of help from the State; whereas the mass of the poor have no resources of their own to fall back upon, and must chiefly depend upon the assistance of the State. (Pope Leo XIII, *On the Condition of Labor* [[Rerum Novarum](#)], no. 37)

"The poor will always have you" (Mathew 26:10-12)

St Henry's Cares

Most individuals experiencing homelessness reported a job loss, unemployment or alcohol/drug use as the event or condition that led to their homelessness. St Henry's, through My Brothers and Sisters Kitchen and other St Henry's ministries, has been serving homeless individuals and individuals at-risk of becoming homeless with dignity and respect.

The essential services that would benefit our neighbors in need, both the poor and homeless, centers on laying the fertile ground for them to transition out of homelessness. These services will greatly aid the Region's vision in tackling the root causes of the poor and homeless and helping these individuals become self-sufficient in a sustainable manner.

This vision, through the collaborative efforts of the government, neighborhood associations, non-profits, faith-based communities and businesses, will strive to provide the essential services to our neighbors in need; housing and/or shelter, education, medical care, substance abuse treatment, identification application or recovery, meals, legal aid and employment opportunities, in a safe and healthy environment.

St Henry's Pastoral Affirmation on the Poor and Homeless

In following the Catholic Corporal Works of Mercy, St. Henry Catholic Church affirms the preferential option to assist and offer supportive services to people who are poor, at risk and homeless in Gresham, Oregon.

- We will treat everyone with respect and dignity.
- We will strive to serve others with honesty, integrity, empathy and patience.
- We will provide a non-judgmental environment for everyone.
- We will strive in the spirit of charity to accommodate and tolerate the inconveniences and annoyances that may be created by those less fortunate.

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or sister is without food, clothes and daily necessities. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm and well fed" but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds" (James 2:14-18)