

Prayer: Solidarity and Poverty in words.....

- Poverty means having to do without basic needs. It means being last, forgotten, judged wrongly by others. Male, 44, Delaware, household of three, income less than \$8,860
- "Consequently, the promotion of justice is at the heart of a true culture of solidarity. It is not just a question of giving one's surplus to those in need, but of helping entire peoples presently excluded or marginalized to enter into the sphere of economic and human development'." Pope John Paul II, *World Day of Peace Message* 2001
- To me, it is not being poor in itself that holds any meaning; it is seeing all the wealth in others, and of our nation that makes you feel poor -- like living within many states of hopelessness. Male, 40, California, household of nine, income less than \$8,860.
- "We are called in a special way to serve the poor and vulnerable; to build bridges of solidarity among peoples of differing races and nations, LANGUAGE and ability, gender and culture." US Catholic Bishops, *Communities of Salt and Light*
- I have lived in poverty for several years and the worst part for me has been lack of respect, opportunities and resources. Female, 25, household of four, income of \$8,860 to \$11,939
- "We are a very diverse community of faith racially, ethnically, economically, and ideologically. This diversity should be respected, reflected and celebrated in our social ministry." US Catholic Bishops, *Communities of Salt and Light*
- You are voiceless and somewhat powerless to change your situation, because you are too busy trying to survive to make the changes you need to improve your situation. Female, 40, Washington, household of one, income less than \$8,860
- "Catholicism does not call us to abandon the world but to help shape it. This does not mean leaving worldly tasks and responsibilities but transforming them...Social justice and the common good are built up or town down day by day in the countless decisions and choices we make." US Bishops, *Everyday Christianity* *
- I'm a senior, disabled, all alone, no money, I sit in front of television all day why? Too poor to socialize. Poverty is like being in prison. Why even try to stay alive? For what? Female, 62, Oregon, household of one, income less than \$8,860
- "Our world is entering the new millennium burdened by the contradictions of an economic, cultural and technological progress which offers immense possibilities to a fortunate few, while leaving millions of others not only on the margins of progress but in living conditions far below the minimum demanded by human dignity...Christians must learn to make their act of faith in Christ by discerning his voice in the cry for help that rises from this world of poverty." Pope John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, Apostolic Letter at the Close of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, January 6, 2001
- People don't get that stereotypes aren't accurate and that being poor isn't easy and isn't desired. Also, hiring the poor shouldn't scare the middle and upper classes, and it does. Female, 49, Oregon, household of one, income of less than \$8,860
- "For the Catholic faithful, the commitment to build peace and justice is not secondary but essential." Pope John Paul II, *World Day of Peace Message* 2000
- We are brainwashed to believe we have value in proportion to what we consume: more things = more value. Lacking funds to consume, we feel worthless and angry. So we steal or feel low self-esteem. Female, 62, New York, household of two, income of \$8,860 to \$11,939
- "Being a believer means that one lives a certain way walking with the Lord, doing justice, loving kindness, and living peaceably among all people. Christian discipleship means practicing what Jesus preached." US Bishops, *Everyday Christianity*
- Society tends to believe if people are poor it is their fault. I feel people are just prejudiced against the poor as they are people of color. Poor children are not treated as well in school because the teachers seem to feel they are a waste of time anyway. Female, 40, Missouri, household of three, income of \$15,020 to \$18,099
- "It is a sign of hope that, despite many serious obstacles, initiatives for peace continue to spring up day by day, with the generous cooperation of many people. Peace is a building constantly under construction." Pope John Paul II, *World Day of Peace Message* 2000

- Struggling to pay bills, constant disconnection notices, not having money to wash and purchase clothing to work in because bills and household needs have to come first. Listening to your children say they are hungry, but not knowing what you are going to be able to give them before your foodstamps come. Female, 32, Missouri, household of five, income of less than \$8,860
- ...Radical changes in world politics leave America with a heightened responsibility to be for the world an example of a genuinely free, democratic, just and humane society. Pope John Paul II, St. Louis, Missouri, January 1999
- I am poor so I know poverty. Its wearing tattered clothes and shoes and having to bow my head in the face of injustice and oppression. Male, 55, Florida, household of two, income of less than \$8,860
- From salvation history we learn that power is responsibility: it is service, not privilege. Its exercise is morally justifiable when it is used for the good of all, when it is sensitive to the needs of the poor and defenseless. Pope John Paul II, St. Louis, Missouri, January 1999
- Poor = helpless. Poor + Black = helpless, hopeless. Poor + Black + female + Catholic = encouraged fighter. Female, 62, Ohio, household of two, income of \$11,940 to \$15,019
- America first proclaimed its independence on the basis of self-evident moral truths. America will remain a beacon of freedom for the world as long as it stands by those moral truths which are the very heart of its historical experience. And so America: If you want peace, work for justice. If you want justice, defend life. If you want life, embrace the truth, the truth revealed by God." Pope John Paul II, St. Louis, Missouri, January 1999
- Not being able to enjoy a quality of life that gives dignity, hope for the future and the education of our children. Male, 58, Texas, household of one, income of less than \$8,860
- Come, Holy Spirit, and open our hearts, minds, and souls to your presence. Grace us with the strength to follow the examples of Jesus. Like Jesus, may the Spirit provide us with a voice to cry out for justice for the poor. Remind us that what we do to the least of those among us, we do to you." *Answering the Voice of the Spirit*, The Catholic Campaign for Human Development

Let Us Pause and place ourselves in the presence of God,

God of Solidarity,

Open our eyes to see, our ears to hear, and our voices to sing the many praises of you and of those who are on the margins of our world.

May we love others, even when love is hard to find.

May we seek justice, even when it is against the norm of our peers.

May we seek communion, even when we want to be our own individual self.

May we live in solidarity in all that we do, all that we are, and all that we are becoming.

Amen.