

Reflections on Poverty in America

Part I

- “Act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8)
- “For the Catholic faithful, the commitment to build peace and justice is not secondary but essential.” (Pope Saint John Paul II, “World Day of Peace Message 2000”)
- “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.” (USCCB, “Everyday Christianity”)
- “Remember the time of hunger in the time of plenty, poverty and want in the day of wealth.” (Sirach 18:25)
- “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 Saint John Paul II, “Homily of John Paul II, at the Cathedral Basilica,” St. Louis, Missouri, January 1999)

Part II: “Real Words from Americans Living in Poverty”

- “It means having to do without basic needs. It means being last, forgotten, judged wrongly by others.” (Male, 44, Delaware, household of three)
- “Poor is a person that has a bad education and for that he or she cant [sic] create a successful business to give him or her their own incomes. When the people have the capacity to make their own money—without stealing it or asking for it—they are wealthy.” (Male, 28, New York, household of five)
- “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)
- “I have lived in poverty for several years and the worst part for me has been the lack of respect, opportunities, and resources.” (Female, 25, household of four)
- “You are treated as a second class citizen.” (Male, 47, Oregon, household of one)
- “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)

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The quotations in part II are from the website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB] as part of their education program on social justice.)

