

So, how are the children?

Raising awareness of the status of children in our diocese

Quiz question:

Which country has the highest rate of children living in poverty:

*Poland,
Greece,
Bulgaria or
the United States*

Quiz question:

What percentage of children in Monroe County live at or below the federal poverty level?

(For a family of four, "poverty level" is \$22,350)

10% 12% 15% or 20%

If you chose the answers you most wished weren't true, you'd be correct. The poverty rate for U.S. children is the worst of the four, and nearly at the bottom for all industrialized nations. And yes, 1 in 5 children (20%) in Monroe county lives in poverty.

Sheldon Danziger, the director of the National Poverty Center at the University of Michigan states, "Among rich countries, the U.S. is exceptional," he said. "We are exceptional in our tolerance of poverty."

As Catholics we profess a belief in the sanctity of human life, from "womb to tomb", yet in one of the richest countries in the world, we tolerate having 1 in 7 of our neighbors, and nearly a quarter of the children, live under poverty conditions that do not respect human dignity.

During this session of the New York State legislature, the Diocesan Public Policy Committee is focusing on the status of children in our state and region. To improve conditions for children we know we have to support low income parents. The issue we've chosen to focus on is child care.

If you aren't currently raising kids, you might not realize how expensive good quality child care is and how vitally important it is for working parents.

Child care can cost \$5,000, \$7,000, up to even \$14,000 per year, depending on the type of care and the age of the child. Without support to cover this expense, parents are often forced to quit their jobs or to place their children in undesirable and even unhealthy child care situations.

Early childhood studies show that without proper child care that includes good nutrition and positive, stimulating educational activity, kids start to fall behind. "Babysitting" which involves hours in front of the TV affects children's ability to learn and to interact socially. This can take a toll on their success in school and in work for the rest of their lives.



On February 9 & 10 in our parishes across the diocese, Catholics will be asked to sign petitions urging New York State officials to invest \$300 million in subsidies for high-quality child care to low-income working families. This support will help keep parents earning paychecks to avoid sliding more deeply into poverty and help keep kids safe and developing to their full potential. You can find the petition and further information at <http://www.dor.org/index.cfm/catholic-charities/public-policy/child-care/>

The Masai people in Africa greet each other with the question "How are the children?", recognizing that if the children in a community are well, the whole community is well. We would be wise to learn from their example.

Justice & Peace Ministry of Catholic Charities

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Being Poor

Being poor is knowing exactly how much everything costs.

Being poor is hoping the toothache goes away.

Being poor is knowing your kid goes to friends' houses but never has friends over to yours.

Being poor is going to the restroom before you get in the school lunch line so your friends will be ahead of you and won't hear you say "I get free lunch" when you get to the cashier.

Being poor is hoping your kids don't have a growth spurt.

Being poor is thinking \$8 an hour is a really good deal.

Being poor is Goodwill underwear.

Being poor is stealing meat from the store, frying it up before your mom gets home and then telling her she doesn't have make dinner tonight because you're not hungry anyway.

Being poor is feeling the glued soles tear off your supermarket shoes when you run around the playground.

Being poor is your kid's school being the one with the 15-year-old textbooks and no air conditioning.

Being poor is an overnight shift under florescent lights.

Being poor is a bathtub you have to empty into the toilet.

Being poor is living next to the freeway.

Being poor is a heater in only one room of the house.

Being poor is a sidewalk with lots of brown glass on it.

Being poor is people surprised to discover you're not actually lazy.

Being poor is needing that 35-cent raise.

Being poor is not taking the job because you can't find someone you trust to watch your kids.

-Taken from "Being Poor" essay
by John Scalzi
on www.whatever.scalzi.com

Status of children *in utero*...

40 Years in the Desert: January 22 marks Anniversary of Roe v. Wade decision

From the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops:

"In 2013 our country will observe a shameful anniversary, marking forty years of a "culture of death" that began when the U.S. Supreme Court, in Roe v. Wade, struck down all state laws restricting abortion.

Since the advent of "legalized" abortion, over 53 million children have lost their lives, and their parents and family members have been forever, unalterably changed.

In addition to opening the door to abortion on request for all nine months of pregnancy, the Supreme Court's decision eroded respect for human life and led to a growing acceptance of death as the "solution" to personal and societal problems..."

Among the symptoms of this culture of death the Church counts euthanasia, assisted suicide, destruction of human embryos for

research and fertility efforts, the death penalty, war, and targeted assassinations.

"The nationwide death toll from abortions since 1973 is staggering... it is as if ...every person living in the Atlantic Coast states from Maine through Virginia had perished from the earth.

And yet the number of deaths alone cannot begin to convey the full impact of the loss to families and to our nation of each unique, unrepeatable human being, who was created with the capacity to love, to learn, to share and contribute to their families and to our country. Nor can numbers convey the depth of grief and pain experienced by the parents and grandparents of aborted children..."

Action Steps:

*Join fellow Catholics in the annual **March for Life** on January 22 in Washington D.C. Contact Bob at radorscheid@hotmail.com for bus seat availability

* Learn about our U.S. bishops' **Call to Prayer for Life, Marriage, and Religious Liberty** on www.usccb.org. Offer to help promote the program in your parish.

* Pray the rosary. Pray for an end to abortions, for women facing this terrible decision, for men pressuring women to have abortions, and for all the saintly people who run pregnancy care centers to support women in choosing life.

We renew our offer of assistance to anyone considering abortion: If you are overwhelmed by the decisions you face, if you cannot afford medical care, if you are homeless or feel helpless, whatever your needs, we will help you. The Church and her ministries, inspired by the word and example of Jesus Christ, will help you with compassion and without condemnation.

- "A Matter of the Heart",
US Conference of Catholic Bishops