

Justice, Peace and Life

June 2015

Summertime... and the Livin' Isn't Always Easy

*Poverty calls us to sow hope.... Poverty is the flesh of the poor Jesus, in that child who is hungry,
... in those unjust social structures. -Pope Francis, Meeting with Students of Jesuit Schools*

Summer vacation ought to be a time of joy and adventure for children. For children living poverty, however, summer brings its own set of stresses and hardships. During summer vacation poor children no longer have access to free school breakfast and lunch programs, and are at risk for hunger and malnutrition. Low-wage parents have to figure out appropriate child care, which can be prohibitively expensive. Otherwise children can be left on their own for many hours in environments that are not always safe or healthy. Without adequate adult supervision and educational activities, children can experience "academic backsliding", losing some of the skills and knowledge they gained during the academic year, making future academic success harder to achieve.

This summer, Bishop Matano, the Priests' Council and the Diocesan Public Policy Committee are asking parishioners to learn more about the realities of children in poverty. Learning some of the startling statistics on this issue is one place to start:

- **Over half** of the children in the city of Rochester live in poverty.
- In every county of our 12-county diocese, child poverty rates are in the **double digits**.
- According to UNICEF, the United States ranks **26th out of 29** among wealthy countries in overall child well-being.

These figures should make our jaws drop.

Then they should spur us to take action, to work toward insuring the God-given dignity of these precious little ones.



Photo by Robert Tilford, groundreport.com

Members of the Diocesan Public Policy Committee have compiled a packet of information that provides some examples of parish activities that address child poverty, from praying to advocating to promoting Fair Trade. (See next page for more information on that topic). It also lists public policies that are shown to make a real difference in lifting people out of poverty.

Please read these materials over, share them with your pastor, and find ways to speak out for children living in poverty. You'll find them here on the diocesan web site:

<http://www.dor.org/tasks/sites/home/assets/File/children%20and%20families%20in%20poverty.pdf>

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**Faith and Mike Tarby:
Catholic Relief Services
Fair Trade Ambassadors
for the
Diocese of Rochester!**

Faith and Mike Tarby, members of Blessed Sacrament Parish community in Elmira, have been commissioned as **Catholic Relief Services Fair Trade Ambassadors for the Diocese of Rochester**. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) provides special training for CRS Fair Trade Ambassadors at CRS national headquarters in Baltimore.



Faith and Mike bring considerable experience to this global solidarity ministry.

As leaders of Blessed Sacrament Parish's *Global Solidarity Team*, Faith and Mike and their team have, for many years, hosted CRS Fair Trade sales of handcrafts, coffee, and chocolate. They have also educated the parish community about Catholic Relief Services humanitarian and development work in 101 countries around the world on behalf of the U.S. Catholic community, coordinated the CRS Rice Bowl and partnered with other parish ministries to integrate global solidarity.

Pope Francis appeals for a return to person-centered ethics in the world of finance and economics, and calls on us to care for God's gifts of creation and for the poor. Fair Trade is by its very nature *person-centered* and Fair Trade producers treat the environment with respect and a commitment to sustainability. When we make the conscious choice to purchase Fair Trade goods, we are putting the values of Catholic Social Teaching into action and working to realize a Gospel vision of economic justice.

Faith and Mike are ready to help parishes and schools promote global economic justice, act in global solidarity, participate in the fair trade marketplace, and learn more about Catholic Relief Services.

**Contact them: faithtarby@aol.com or 607-733-3361 or use this form - mail it to:
Faith and Mike Tarby – Blessed Sacrament Parish, 1010 Davis Street, Elmira, NY 14901**

Please contact us/send information on *Catholic Relief Services Fair Trade Program*

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

Parish/School _____