



## PROMOTION OF HUMAN DIGNITY

- ✓ We advocate for the right of each person, especially children and the elderly, to have access to the basic necessities of life—food, shelter, work, education, healthcare and a safe healthy environment
- ✓ We advocate for policies that will allow those in poverty and the working poor the opportunity to participate within the competitive workforce and become self-sufficient.
- ✓ We oppose unjust discrimination, racism, torture and human trafficking.

### A PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR

*“When we are generous in welcoming people and sharing something with them—some food, a place in our home, our time—not only do we no longer remain poor: we are enriched.”*

*Pope Francis*

*“The obligation to provide justice for all means that the poor have the single most urgent economic claim on the conscience of the nation.”*

*Economic Justice for All #86*

As the largest non-governmental provider of healthcare, education and human services, we draw upon our extensive experience living with and serving those vulnerable people who are working and poor. We are guided by Catholic moral principles: respect for human life and the dignity of each person, the importance of family, the value of work, and a duty to encourage the participation of all in our community life.

When the economy fails to generate sufficient jobs, there is a moral obligation to protect the life and dignity of unemployed and underemployed workers and their families. We believe that all persons should take responsibility for themselves and their families *and* have the opportunity to adequately do so, yet every day more and more people are at risk of falling into poverty. We need to provide services in the area of education and job training—key steps in providing long-term sustainable solutions to help lift people out of poverty.

Those who are poor and the “working” poor are already struggling for their daily survival and facing increased risk of homelessness, hunger and illness. Their compelling needs create a priority claim on our consciences, on our common resources and therefore on the choices that elected officials make on our behalf.

Even if people can find work, this does not automatically provide an escape from poverty. Declining wages have put safe and affordable housing out of reach for many workers. It is unconscionable that significant numbers of *full-time wage earners* must live in homeless shelters.

Many people also live in extreme poverty facing limited resources and few opportunities for employment. Criminals take advantage of these vulnerable people, offering them a way to escape the harsh realities of their lives. The violence in our communities must end.

Human trafficking is a horrific crime against the basic dignity and rights of the person. Pope Francis, along with other religious leaders, signed a declaration to call for an end to slavery by 2020.

For more information, visit [www.catholic.org](http://www.catholic.org), or contact Linda Wanner, [lwanner@catholic.org](mailto:lwanner@catholic.org), 916.313.4017