

Highlights of this Issue

Seasons of the Liturgical Year and Ministry

As this issue focuses on the liturgical year, we are reminded that the church seasons sometimes mimic the seasons of the year, and the seasons of our ministry.



As the author of Ecclesiastes reminds us, "For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven...". How does this translate into our ministry with young people? Is our ministry reflective of the rich heritage and tradition contained in the observance of the liturgical seasons?

Hopefully, the articles and resources in this edition of the *NACYML News* will help each of us reflect on the liturgical year and the influence of the seasons in our lives and ministry.

As we come to the close of the Advent season, the NACYML Leadership Team, Publications and Newsletter Committees, and the NFCYM/NACYML Staff extend prayerful good wishes to each of you for a blessed and joyous Christmas season!

Seasons of Change

A great way to reflect on our vocation as ministers is to consider our ministries through the lens of the seasons. Does our ministry look more like summer, fall, winter, or spring? What characteristics of your ministry are similar to each of the seasons?

[Read more of Jenn's article...](#)

Year-Round Liturgical Year

As ministers do we bring young people into a deeper understanding of the liturgical year and our tradition by the example of our actions and rituals depending on the particular liturgical season? During Advent

From the Chair

During Advent, I am planning for the Lent and Easter season. When Ash Wednesday arrives, summer ministries and programming are on my desktop. The quiet patterns of Ordinary Time are anything but quiet as I recruit volunteers, plot a calendar for the school year, and weave ministries, programs, and family into what looks on paper to be a manageable response to a full and fulfilling life.

[Read more of Mary's article...](#)

Inviting the Hungry to the Feast

If you have enough food to eat today, consider yourself very blessed, because over one billion people are not so fortunate.

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are we giddy with anticipation of the coming of the Lord? Do we proclaim 'Emmanuel' and 'prepare ye the way' or do we race right to Christmas?

[Read more of Rich's article...](#)

The Not So Ordinary Time

Do not get me wrong, I love the holidays and the liturgical seasons that provide a time of preparation for each. For the most part though, I am glad when they are over. There is a craziness and energy around the distinctive seasons of the liturgical year that, as a youth worker, I am grateful when they are past.

[Read more of Dean's article...](#)

According to the United Nations World Food Programme, one out of every six fellow human beings is suffering the pain of hunger. Every six seconds a child dies because of hunger and hunger related diseases.

[Read Tony's article...](#)

Living the Paschal Mystery


Our faith is centered on the Paschal Mystery. This is not something that happened 2000 years ago; it is a message for us right now. It is a message youth ministers should incorporate into life and ministry.

[Read the entire article...](#)

Important Information and Useful Resources

Announcing the 2009-2010 OnCourse Webinar Program

NACYML once again offers online ministry formation for both its membership and all those working in the field of youth ministry. These are provided in conjunction with Ministry Training Source (MTS) through six online webinar sessions. Download the brochure for more information.

 (30 KB)



PEW Research Study on Latino Youth in America

This report takes an in-depth look at Hispanics who are ages 16 to 25, a phase of life when young people make choices that-for better and worse-set their path to adulthood. For this particular ethnic group, it is also a time when they navigate the intricate, often porous borders between the two cultures they inhabit-American and Latin American. Visit the PEW Hispanic Center website to download/read the report.

Purchase NACYML Polo Shirts

Wear your pride and membership in the only professional association for Catholic youth ministers! NACYML polo shirts are perfect for any occasion. Made of a comfortable 50/50 blend, and sporting the NACYML logo, the shirts offer a classy compliment to jeans, dress pants, or shorts. The black, short sleeved shirts are available in small, medium, large, and extra large sizes. Order yours today at the NFCYM Online Store.

Mark Your Calendar for the Biennial NACYML Membership Meeting

The NACYML Membership Meeting, held in conjunction with the National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry, will take place on Thursday, December 9, 2010 in New Orleans. On Wednesday, NACYML will also be sponsoring a pre-conference focused on using the Strength Finders 2.0 tools for ministry. More information will be forthcoming during the early part of 2010.

NACYML Members' Website

Check out the [NACYML Members' website](#) for more important updates,

resources, and information.

A Picture Is Worth . . .


Articles in this newsletter correspond to the Core Competencies detailed in the National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers.

Look for the symbol in the article that indicates which core competency the article addresses.



To learn more about the standards, see the [resource page](#) which is always accessible from the newsletter navigation bar. It provides a summary of the core competencies and the specialized competencies for youth ministry leaders.



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From the Chair

Mary Mueller
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Good Shepherd Catholic Church
Shawnee, Kansas

Planning Ahead for the Seasons

During Advent, I am planning for the Lent and Easter season. When Ash Wednesday arrives, summer ministries and programming are on my desktop. The quiet patterns of Ordinary Time are anything but quiet as I recruit volunteers, plot a calendar for the school year, and weave ministries, programs, and family into what looks on paper to be a manageable response to a full and fulfilling life.

Last month in Kansas City, we were present for the [National Catholic Youth Conference \(NCYC\)](#). Months of planning and coordinating culminated in three days of faith, challenge, and the blessing of being with our young church as they gathered en masse. What an experience to be in the moment during that event! Away from office phones, e-mail, and other distractions, NCYC offered the unique opportunity of ministering in the moment. Being present and gifted by an experience, moving forward in faith and ministry in real time are important to my personal spiritual development.

NACYML Present and Future

Current NACYML activities include the launching of the [OnCourse series of Webinars](#), planning for the annual Leadership Team meeting in January, and the biennial Membership Meeting during the [National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry \(NCCYM\)](#) in New Orleans in 2010.

Planning ahead and living in the moment also involves reflecting on the past. This January will mark the end of my time with the NACYML Leadership Team. Two years of planning preceded the launching of NACYML at NCCYM in Pittsburgh in 2004. Those were years of looking to needs, being affirmed by the membership of the NFCYM, discerning a mission, and building a structure. That original leadership group held in tension the needs of the present and the potential of the future.

In the past six years, NACYML has grown in membership, in leadership, in challenge, and in potential. Current membership is approximately 500. Four new groups of discerned members have been welcomed to the NACYML Leadership Team. The needs of our members continue to be addressed through this newsletter, the NACYML website, and the Facebook and LinkedIn social networking sites. Our continued collaboration with Ministry Training Source brings NACYML members opportunities for online education and formation through the OnCourse program. NACYML continues to support the Catholic Youth Foundation, USA.

These are a few of the ways in which NACYML works and lives in the present while planning for the future. As a member of this group, my present planning involves a discernment for future involvement with this association which has provided work, vision, and blessing in my own ministry for the past eight years.

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As a member of this same association, please spend some time in building the future direction of NACYML while benefiting from your membership in the present.

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Year Round Liturgical Year

Rich Rasmussen
Coordinator of Youth and Catechetical Ministry
Immaculate Conception Church
Ithaca, New York

Those of us who have been in youth ministry for a while certainly know that we did not respond to this call because of its fantastic pay and schedule. If you did, then someone was feeding you a line about your job description. Seriously though, we said yes to this ministry because of our love of the faith and of young people.

Most of the youth ministry leaders that I know or have spoken with over my past twelve years in youth ministry tell me that they follow the academic year for planning groups and events. Typically, the summers lie fallow from a lot of organized groups or activities. This is actually a healthy thing as we need to take the time to recharge. However, when we look at our lives as ministers, do we just try to survive each year in youth ministry or make a conscious effort to live out the seasons of our lives in a way that is an example to young people about our faith tradition?



Living Out the Seasons through Ministry

The seasons that I am speaking of are the seasons of the liturgical year. As ministers do we bring young people into a deeper understanding of the liturgical year and our tradition by the example of our actions and rituals depending on the particular liturgical season? During Advent are we giddy with anticipation of the coming of the Lord? Do we proclaim 'Emmanuel' and 'prepare ye the way' or do we race right to Christmas? During Lent are the young people able to see that we are searching deep within ourselves by our prayer and actions? Do they see us washing the feet of those in our families, our parish communities, and the greater community through our service to them? During Easter do the young people see the incredible hope that we have in the resurrection and how that event brings a new resurrection in each of us? What about ordinary time? Do we just see this particular season as a time that is not as important as Advent, Christmas, Lent, or Easter? Or, do we live our lives in ordinary time where we experience the wonder of the original meaning of Sunday as the Lord's Day?

Life of a Youth Minister

Being a youth ministry leader comes with great challenges. There are so many times where I go through an entire week and it seems like such a blur. Our schedules can become ridden with youth groups, social events, attending sporting events, birthday parties, graduation parties, family engagements, certification courses, etc. It can be difficult to be focused on how



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we live out and experience the specific liturgical seasons as ministers. However, it is definitely something to keep in mind and to strive for as it is the example of our lives that can often be the greatest catechetical tool. Young people are hungry for ways to bring faith filled meaning to their lives. By focusing on the richness of the liturgical year and living our lives as an extension and expression of those seasons, we are able to lead by example and give youth a concrete way to bring that meaning into their own lives.

So, as we continue through Advent, and enter into the Christmas season, how does your life reflect what we believe? Is it impacting the way you minister to young people? I know writing this article has challenged me to think about doing some things differently. I hope it has done the same for you. May God richly bless each of you and the ministry to which you have been called!

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NACYML News

Seasons of Change

Jenn Ledonne
 Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry
 St. Mary of the Assumption Parish
 Alexandria, Kentucky

“For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven...” (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

These Are Gifts from God

The words of the writer of Ecclesiastes, and the words and music of the song *Turn, Turn, Turn* echo in my mind as I consider this article. It is an echo that began during a presentation at the Notre Dame Visions program last summer.

As this issue focuses on the liturgical year, we are reminded that the church seasons sometimes mimic the seasons of the year.



Seasons of the Year and the Church

Winter begins with the season of Advent, with preparation for the white, snowy innocence of the babe born on Christmas Day. The dead of winter, with its Lenten flair reminds us of the need for forgiveness of sin. Spring brings Easter, and the glory of new life and resurrection for all creation. The summer, with the heat from the sun reflecting upon us, reminds us of the flames of Pentecost. It is also a time when we celebrate ordinary time with a cyclical messages from the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Fall brings the of changing leaves. The glorious colors of fall coinciding with the feast of Christ the King.



“Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time...” (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

Seasons of Ministry

A great way to reflect on our vocation as ministers is to consider our ministries through the lens of the seasons. Does our ministry look more like summer,

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fall, winter, or spring? What characteristics of your ministry are similar to each of the seasons?

At times our ministry is growing, strong, vibrant, alive. Other times our ministry may feel stagnant, withering, or dormant. Like the seasons, our ministries cycle through the days, months, or even years. No matter what is going on in our ministries, it is important to remember the scriptures passages from Ecclesiastes; there is a time to everything and it is beautiful because God created it for us and those who will be touched through our ministry.

For Prayerful Consideration

What season would best reflect your ministry? Why? How does your ministry season fit into the current liturgical season?

Michael Carotta gave a wonderful presentation during the Notre Dame Visions program that included thoughts on seasons, vocations, and ministries. The combined wisdom of Mike, his wife, and Parker Palmer inspired this article. Thanks to each of them!

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Practicing Ordinary Time

Beth Simmonds
 Coordinator of Youth Ministry
 St. Christopher Parish
 Columbus, Ohio

"Every moment and every event of every man's life on earth plants something in his soul . . ." (Thomas Merton)

Celebrating Life's Moments

In youth ministry, as in life, we often spend a great deal of energy planning for the big moments. We prepare for big church moments including confirmation, Christmas, and Easter. We celebrate big life moments including birthdays, earning a driver license, college acceptance letters, and graduations.



It is tempting to let ordinary time slip by; lost, often unintentionally, in the pre-planning and post-event processing of the big moments. While we all love the mountaintop moments, Thomas Merton challenges us to remember that what we do with each moment has a deep and lasting meaning.

Recognizing and Celebrating Ordinary Time

During ordinary time, we are challenged to slow down and work to order our lives around Jesus Christ.

- Where do we notice the presence of God in the ordinary of our everyday lives—in the spontaneous moment which could never have been planned or programmed?
- What practices do we engage in which make us mindful of the kingdom here and now ?
- How are we inviting the young people in our ministry to stop multitasking and to be present to this moment?

There has been a great deal of interest in recent years on the reclaiming of ancient Christian practices. Praying the rosary, lectio divina, Liturgy of the Hours, pilgrimage, Sabbath, and fasting are just a few of the many practices which we can explore with members of the young church.

We know from research and from our own experiences that the practices we engage in shape us. They create space in our lives for God to enter and transform us.

This year during ordinary time, maybe we can ask ourselves, what are we planting?

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- [Living Well: Christian Practices for Everyday Life](#), John Roberto, editor
- [Way to Live: Christian Practices for Teens](#), Dorothy Bass and Don Richter, editors
- [Contemplative Youth Ministry: Practicing the Presence of Jesus](#), by Mark Yaconelli

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Living the Paschal Mystery in Youth Ministry

Kyle Holtgrave
Associate Director, Office for Catechesis
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and

Robbie Anderson
Pastoral Associate, Youth Ministry
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The Vine and the Vineyard

In chapter fifteen of John's Gospel, Jesus talks about how he is the vine and his father is the vine-grower. The father, in this metaphor, removes the branches that do not bear fruit and prunes those that do bear fruit so that even more fruit can grow. The passage is another reminder of the Paschal Mystery and gives us a good scriptural basis for ways the Paschal Mystery plays out in our ministry.



Our faith is centered on the Paschal Mystery. This is not something that happened 2000 years ago; it is a message for us right now. It is a message youth ministers should incorporate into life and ministry.

On Holy Thursday, we see that Jesus shares a meal with his friends. We undoubtedly have shared many meals with our teens and leaders.

We have a great team and are getting very comfortable. The vines of our ministry are in great shape and producing much fruit! In our experience with Holy Thursday in youth ministry, things are clicking and running smoothly.

The Gethsemane and Good Friday Experience

However, do not get too comfortable, there is Good Friday. It is going to happen. We see little signs. There does not seem to be the same number of teens coming in the door. It is getting more difficult to focus the group. Some of our adult leaders are dropping out. Dead branches start to appear in our vineyard! We need that Gethsemane moment when we become completely honest with ourselves about what we are doing. As great as things were, they are not working now. It can be frightening to think about making a change.

Yet most people are comfortable, especially the pastor and staff. They really do not see the subtle changes in the ministry vineyard that you do. You may need to end a popular program or change the time of one of your programs. This is risky. There are always people who resist change. You do your homework, reading all the latest trends, and see that you must do something.



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If we examine our vines by evaluating our ministry from time to time, we will likely identify programs or activities that may have been very fruitful at one time but may be stagnating now. These dead branches may need to be cut off so that, as the Gospel parable of the barren fig tree teaches, we are not wasting soil that could be used for other purposes.

On the other hand, as the gardener in the parable recommends, perhaps a program that is stagnating needs a small pruning so that it continues to meet a need. You pray because you know that God knows exactly what you are going through and what needs to be done. This is the faith that Jesus had when he prayed in the garden. Some of the old branches needed to die.

Celebrate Resurrection

Finally after much agonizing, you announce the new changes. Some vines had to be cut, others pruned a little. Perhaps some of your leaders will not be continuing. That can happen with change. You will miss them and it will take a lot of work to rebuild. Like Jesus, you have a passion for your ministry, and you go through the pain as the old way dies.

Now you are able to roll away the stone that was holding progress back and you begin to see a new growth in your ministry vineyard. New volunteers are excited about the new times and ideas you have. New circles of young people begin attending and participating. Your ministry is filled with new life and excitement. Alleluia—celebrate the feast of the Resurrection!

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The Not So Ordinary Time

Dean Diomedes

**NACYML Publications Committee Chair and Youth Ministry Coordinator
St. Linus Church
Norwalk, California**



Do not get me wrong, I love the holidays and the liturgical seasons that provide a time of preparation for each. For the most part though, I am glad when they are over. There is a craziness and energy around the distinctive seasons of the liturgical year that, as a youth worker, I am grateful when they are past.

Preparing for Christmas and Easter



Advent and Lent provide great opportunities for preparation. However, since I have been involved in full time youth ministry, the preparation journey is usually more about providing significant opportunities for youth and families to prepare rather than my own personal experience. Once we finally get to Christmas or Easter I feel like I missed the opportunity to fully enter into

either of the seasons.

It is the same scenario for the Easter and Christmas seasons; they are over before I know it. I have been able to resolve the problem a bit though. The day after Christmas, when people are taking down their trees and lights, or a few days after Easter when the last jellybean or marshmallow peep has been eaten, I am still celebrating! I continue to wish friends and parishioners, 'Happy Easter' or 'Merry Christmas'. People think I am nuts! Our diocesan director of youth ministry once said we should celebrate longer than we prepare for any event. That is exactly what the Easter season does. Think about it.

What About Ordinary Time?

As an opportunity to significantly celebrate at least one of the parts of the liturgical year I affectionately refer to it as the season of Pentecost. Which is not too far off, as ordinary time celebrates the mystery of Christ in all its aspects.

Ordinary time refers to the period of the weeks outside other distinctive liturgical seasons and comes from the Latin term, *tempus per annum* or time throughout the year. It starts on Monday after the celebration of the Baptism of our Lord in early January and continues until the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. The season resumes the Monday after Pentecost

Solemnities and Feast Days During Ordinary Time

- June 24-the birth of John the Baptist
- June 29-the feast of Saints Peter and Paul
- August 6-the feast of the Transfiguration
- September 14-the solemnity of the

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and lasts until the evening before Advent. The season of ordinary time is characterized by the color green.

The biggest reason for my fondness of ordinary time is not that ordinary means plain, bland, drab, or uninteresting, but because the name of the season comes from the words *ordinal* meaning numbered or *ordo* meaning ordered.

Triumph of the Cross

- November 2—the feast of All Souls Day
- November 9—dedication of the Lateran Basilica
- August 15—feast of the Assumption
- November 1—All Saints Day



I like ordinary time because it is just that—ordered. There are not a lot of bells and whistles. It is dependable, reliable, and settled. Time is marked; I like that, it feels good, and I need that. Like my children, I need routine, and ordinary time is always the perfect remedy.

But, as with everything, there are exceptions. During ordinary time there are significant solemnities and holy days that are celebrated. There is still something for the folks who like a good distraction in the midst of order.

The next time you are longing for the next big celebration, the next big liturgy, stop and remember it is easy being green, and celebrate ordinary time!

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Prayer Services with Teens

Katie Hayes
Director of Youth Ministry
St. John of the Cross Parish
Chicago, Illinois

Thinking in advance about three major questions will help you better understand how best to proceed in planning prayer services for young people.

Why Do It?

Is this an annual part of a liturgical season? Is there history as to why this service is happening? Is there a tradition that is being followed, or has a new need arisen in your community? Is there a cause being prayed for? Will specific people be memorialized?



Keep the perspective of the reason for this prayer service or event. Let it mold all the steps of planning.

When and Where?

Will the prayer service take place as a part of your regular youth ministry activities, or during a retreat or other event? Or, will it be held at a different time or day of the week? Will it be held in the youth room, the church, a chapel?



There are positive aspects and drawbacks for each possibility. The key point is to take the time to acknowledge the affects the schedule and space will have on availability of all parties of your prayer service.

How to Do It?

Will teenagers lead the service or will a priest or deacon be available? Will music be live or will iPods/CDs be utilized? Will lighting changes be involved? What other elements or resources are necessary? The time and effort to plan this service will change significantly based on how these questions are answered.

Taking the time to consider the questions in these three areas will help you know who you will need to get involved in the planning and who the prayer service will serve.

Who Needs to Be Involved?

Sometimes youth ministers are forced to work alone, but in the case of a prayer service there are many ways to involve others. Teens can write and read the petitions, teens can lead the music or pick the songs played during quiet prayer time, teens can choose readings. Individuals who can lead a prayer service are endless.

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What will come of your prayer service is up to God. Remember to invite the Holy Spirit to be a part of your preparations!

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Inviting the Hungry to the Feast

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Catholic News Service
Washington, District of Columbia

Editor's Note: As we look at the liturgical season, it is important for us to stay current on topics that provide us with opportunities to live our faith through our actions during all seasons of the year. During this time of giving, let us remember those who are truly in need.

If you have enough food to eat today, consider yourself very blessed, because over one billion people are not so fortunate.

According to the [United Nations World Food Programme](#), one out of every six fellow human beings is suffering the pain of hunger. Every six seconds a child dies because of hunger and hunger related diseases.



This sad river of misery continues to flow on with no end in sight. Consider the following statistics:

- lack of vitamin A kills one million infants each year
- iodine deficiency, threatening 1.9 billion people, is the world's greatest single cause of mental retardation
- iron deficiency is impairing the mental development of approximately forty to sixty percent of children in poor nations
- approximately 146 million children in developing countries are dangerously underweight.

Behind these staggering statistics are real flesh and blood people. If the tables were turned, they would be our mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, children, and grandchildren.

Jacques Diouf, [United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization](#) director-general, recently called on developed nations to significantly increase agricultural funding to poor countries that are unable to presently grow enough food. He was rightly critical of the relatively small amount of assistance given by nations, compared to the \$1.34 trillion spent on armaments and the trillions easy found to rescue the financial sector.

In terms of total dollars, the United States gives more aid to poor nations than any other country: \$24 billion in 2007. But in terms of gross national product and total wealth, the United States ranks last among all the industrialized nations in aid to the poor.

How You Can Help

Kindly help feed the hungry by sending whatever you can afford to [Catholic Relief Services](#), P.O. Box 17090, Baltimore, Maryland 21203-7090. [Donations are also accepted online.](#)

Additionally, contact your representatives in Congress and urge them to fully support the [Roadmap to End Global Hunger and Promote Food Security Act of 2009 \(H.R. 2817\)](#). This bill comprehensively addresses emergency responses, safety nets, nutrition, and agricultural development. It ensures that global hunger gets the highest level of attention possible from the United States government until it is solved.

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At first glance, \$24 billion looks like a generous donation. However, considering that the budget for fiscal year 2007 was \$2.77 trillion, \$24 billion is a drop in the bucket.

You can make a difference here! You can help make it possible for the hungry to be treated as guests at the world's family table.

In a 1970 United Nations resolution, most wealthy countries committed to tackling global poverty and hunger by spending 0.7 percent of their national incomes on international aid. Five countries have kept their promise: Norway, Sweden, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Denmark. The United States gives approximately 0.2 percent of its national income to the world's hungry poor—far below what was promised.

Only after we have taken care of what we want, we then give the little that is left—the crumbs—to the hungry poor.

In his visit to the United States in 1979, Pope John Paul II proclaimed, "The poor of the United States and of the world are your brothers and sisters in Christ. Never be content to leave them just the crumbs of the feast. Take of your substance, and not just of your abundance, in order to help them. Treat them like guests at your family table."

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