



Lent 2018: 21st Century Poverty

Illuminating the Reality of Poverty in America

			WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 14 <i>Ash Wednesday</i>	THURSDAY 15	FRIDAY 16	SATURDAY 17
SUNDAY 18	MONDAY 19	TUESDAY 20	21	22	23	24
						
	Call Your Rep!		Call Your Senators!		Reflect With Us	
25	26	27	28	MARCH 1	2	3
						
	Call Your Rep!		Call Your Senators!		Reflect With Us	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
						
	Call Your Rep!		Call Your Senators!		Reflect With Us	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
						
	Call Your Rep!		Call Your Senators!		Reflect With Us	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
						
	Call Your Rep!		Call Your Senators!		Reflect With Us	
<i>Palm Sunday</i> 25	26	27	28	29	<i>Good Friday</i> 30	31
						
	Call Your Rep!		Call Your Senators!			

APRIL 1
Easter Sunday

Monday dial your Representative: 1-888-422-4555

Wednesday dial your Senators: 1-888-885-1748

(call twice to reach both of your Senators)

Friday dial NETWORK for a weekly reflection at 12ET/9PT:

1-712-770-8002 access code: **793281#**



NETWORK

www.networklobby.org/Lent

Illuminating the Reality of 21st Century Poverty

As we embark on our Lenten journey of prayerful reflection, let our minds and hearts be opened to the reality of poverty and inequality in our nation.

Giving Up the False Narrative of Poverty: We must reflect on who is living in poverty and why.

Too often, we hear if people “work hard” they will “get ahead.” This misconception is light years from the reality. Federal policy has exacerbated the gap in income and wealth inequality, and the current dominant narrative seeks to undercut real solutions and stop gaps – like safety net programs – to benefit the wealthiest.

Making a Decent Living: Jobs respect the dignity of workers and pay a living wage without exploitation.

Our faith teaches that people should be able to receive a living wage and be able to provide for themselves and their families, while also having time for leisure. Unfortunately, in the 21st century, working a full-time job in the United States does not necessarily mean a person can adequately provide for themselves or their family.

Financial Security and Assets: Assets help to pay off debt, save for the future, and plan for emergencies.

There are two ways to acquire wealth: build it or inherit it. Inherited wealth bestows a significant advantage for individuals to get ahead in our society, whereas structural challenges prevent people from building the assets they need to prepare for the future. At the same time, taxes are structured to benefit recipients of inherited wealth with lower tax rates, and the significant benefits our tax code can provide to people at the economic margins are minimal.

Food that Nourishes: Access to quality, healthy food allows people to lead full and productive lives.

Food insecurity has changed the reality of hunger in the United States today. With the increase of food deserts, areas without easy access to grocery stores, more families are unable to purchase healthy, nutritious foods. Foods that are less healthy are more readily available and less expensive for families who are struggling.

Quality, Affordable Housing: Safe, affordable housing and access to resources help us all thrive.

Owning a home is out of reach for so many families, and currently renters – in rural and urban communities alike – are spending too high a percentage of their monthly income on housing. Housing determines many other indicators of poverty, such as quality of education, commute time, access to public transportation, safety, and more. Everyone has a right to live in safe and affordable communities.

Healthcare and Wellbeing: Access to healthcare is a human right.

Health and poverty intersect and influence each other. Currently there is a heavy reliance on employer-based healthcare, but the reality is that many uninsured individuals have at least one employed member of their family. The Affordable Care Act made great progress, but much of this success is being rolled back.

21st Century Abundance: Moving from individualism to community is necessary to share our prosperity.

NETWORK’s mission is grounded in the belief that big-picture, structural solutions that share our nation’s prosperity supplemented with current safety net programs will mend the gaps in economic inequality. But, these programs and policies are constantly under attack because of our society’s incorrect understanding of 21st century poverty.

How to Take Action during Lent

As we reflect on poverty and inequality each week, let us also commit to living a faith that does works, by calling our elected officials to remind them of our beliefs on the most pressing issues of the day.

During weeks when Congress is particularly busy working on a policy proposal that will mend the gaps, your weekly email will contain a specific call-in script for you to use. However, below is a convenient “cheat sheet” for you to use with your elected officials on any 21st Century Poverty issue area – regardless of their party affiliation.

Call Schedule:

Monday dial your Representative: **1-888-422-4555**

Wednesday dial your Senators: **1-888-885-1748**
(Call twice to reach both Senators)

Friday dial NETWORK for a weekly reflection at 12 noon ET/ 9 am PT: **1-712-770-8002**
Access code: **793281#**

Sample Script for Making Your Calls

Here is a sample script you can use to call your Representative/Senators about any of NETWORK’s 21st Century Poverty issues:

“Hi My name is [NAME] and I am a constituent from [CITY/TOWN]. As a member of NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice, I’m committed to learning about the reality of 21st poverty in the United States. This week, I was reflecting on [ISSUE] and I learned [FACT]. It made me realize that we need [POSSIBLE SOLUTION]. This is a core part of my faith belief and I hope that the [REPRESENTATIVE/SENATOR] will agree with my view. What is the [REPRESENTATIVE/SENATOR’s] stance?”

Feel free to change your message based on a personal story!

Don’t know who your Representative is? Our system will connect you automatically based on zip code, but you can also find out at www.networklobby.org/findyourrep