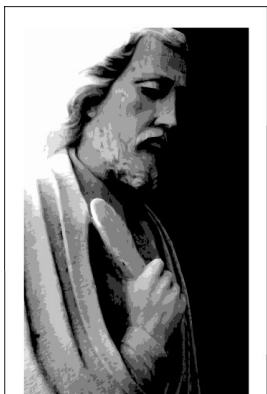


# Justice Herald

February 2011



*Saint*  
**MATTHEW**  
*Catholic Church*

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## Suggestions?

Have a suggestion for the newsletter? Maybe an idea or activity for an article? Please forward your ideas and suggestions to the Justice and Human Concerns Committee c/o the Parish Center.

## Poverty Simulation by Kelly Thiry

Several members of St. Matthew's had the privilege of attending a Poverty Simulation at St. Patrick's Church in November that was put on by the Brown County Extension. I was a little skeptical of what this might be. I knew people who lived in poverty and was aware of some of the public programs available to those in need. In fact I'm sure most of us have supported and donated to these organizations in the past. Boy, was I wrong.

The evening started with us lined up in the hall waiting for instructions. We were invited to enter the room and take a seat in an empty chair. The room was set up with groups of various numbers of chairs in the center of the room. There were even individ-

ual chairs and some of the groups had a doll in them. These would be our families for the evening. In each group was an envelope and in the envelope was our "family situation" that contained information on family circumstances such as job status, what our living expenses were and what the family's needs were. The perimeter of the room was set up with tables which were manned by volunteers which represented areas we would need to go during the simulation.

I was a single dad with two children, one school age and one infant. The simulation was set up so that 10 minutes equaled one week. In those 10 minutes Dad (me) had to

work eight minutes. In the remaining two minutes he had to get the children to school and daycare, pay bills, get to the grocery store and cash paychecks. The first week I didn't get to the grocery store, so my children had nothing to eat. I was so worried about that, I failed to make sure my child got her homework done. Homework was not on my radar of things to worry about. I had to figure out how I was going to get things done the next week. I was surprised by how frustrated I got with having to wait in lines. I would not even wait to get a receipt for bills because I was in such a hurry. This impatience cost me when I received a notice that "my electricity

*(Continued on page 3)*

## New Leaf Market

**Grocery co-op plants the seeds of healthy living and economic growth**  
Green Bay, Wis. – Jan. 11, 2010 – A revolution in healthy living and economic growth is taking root in Green Bay. The New Leaf Market Co-op

is a full-service, member-owned, cooperative grocery store in downtown Green Bay that will feature local, healthy and fair-priced foods. The concept behind the New Leaf Market is to combine the variety and convenience of a supermarket with the fresh

taste and local-grown goodness of a farmers market. The cooperative's goal is to increase access to healthy food, support local growers and producers and encourage economic growth and the development of new food enterprises.

*(Continued on page 2)*

### **(New Leaf Market continued)**

To make the grocery store a reality, the New Leaf Market is seeking to grow its membership base to 1,000 member-owners by store opening. More than 125 member-owners have joined New Leaf Market since the cooperative kicked off its membership campaign in fall. You can become part of this innovative, community-building effort and help make the New Leaf Market a reality by purchasing a member share. The grocery store will feature a full selection of healthy and natural foods – including organic produce, meats and dairy; locally sourced and locally grown foods; bulk gro-

cery items and fair-trade products; and a variety of other natural foods and specialty items. The full-service grocery store also will feature a deli, bakery and café.

More than simply offering another retail outlet for purchasing healthy foods, the cooperative is truly a grassroots revolution in grocery shopping. In addition to economic membership perks – such as special discounts and patronage refunds – member-owners enjoy shareholder voting rights and a voice in deciding the types of products and foods that will be sold at the store.

By joining the cooperative, Green Bay residents can make a life-changing commitment to improving personal health while also investing in local farmers and the long-term health of Green Bay's economy and the local community.

To learn how you can help make the New Leaf Market a reality by becoming a member-owner, visit the cooperative's Web site at [www.newleafmarket.org](http://www.newleafmarket.org). For updates on New Leaf Market news, visit the cooperative's WordPress blog at [newleafmarket.wordpress.com](http://newleafmarket.wordpress.com) or its Facebook page at [facebook.com/](http://facebook.com/)

### **Haiti** by Kay Schumacher

Friends of Haiti has been very fortunate to hire an in-country coordinator who is working with and for the people of Haiti in the areas we visit. Jean Jocelyn Maurisset is from Haiti, in his twenties, and studied at Fox Valley Tech for two years. He is very energetic and bright and is committed to the welfare of his people. Jean lives with his parents, is active in his parish and is a scout leader.

Jean was with the members of the education committee as we traveled to the schools in the Thomazeau and Grand Boulage areas during our visit in Oct. 2010. His duties include working with the pastors of both parishes and the villages they serve. Since October and the outbreak of cholera, Jean has been

tirelessly working to install clean water systems in the villages and to teach about good hygiene and the necessity of using purified water in order to avoid the disease. In remote mountain villages he has been working with

Tristant, pastor of Grand Boulage, to make chlorine available and then showing the villagers how to use it to purify the water in their homes. Education of some kind seems to be a part of every project the people undertake. The scope of the education committee is broad, sometimes blending with the work of the development committee.

Our main focus is still the education of children, however, and we are still providing funds for the "Adopt a School" program in the village of Joineau and are looking to add another school in the coming school year.

School lunch programs are always a concern and we have pledged to provide the funding to begin school lunches in 2-3 remote mountain villages this semester (January, 2011). The lunch program at St. Therese School in Thomazeau has a new "rocket stove" which uses twigs instead of charcoal and cooks far more efficiently. Jean is showing the cooks how to use and maintain this precious "appliance".

The political situation in Haiti is difficult and possibly unsafe right now and future trips in spring will be determined by those events as they unfold. Fortunately, with Jean working with us and communicating with us constantly, the work with the people in Haiti can continue whether we are able to be there or not. He truly is a blessing.

**(Poverty Simulation continued)**

was being turned off for non-payment.” When I went back to the Electric Company to protest that I had paid the electric bill they asked to see my receipt. Guess what- I didn’t have one because that was the receipt I didn’t wait for. Guess what- I didn’t have one because that was the receipt I didn’t wait for.

*My impressions of my experience were: I couldn’t believe how exhausted I felt, how overwhelming it was to just get through each week. I literally was feeling stressed. I could feel my blood pressure elevate, I had a tightening in my chest. I could feel the anxiety. For me this was just an exercise. It made me really think about those for whom this is their reality.*

*I work in the healthcare industry and the largest percentage of patients who no-show for an appointment are on public assistance. There has always been this perception that these people don’t care if they are a no-show. After all, they weren’t paying for the care they received. This experience made me completely re-evaluate this attitude. I now understand*

*better the difficulties facing the poor. Some of their daily priorities could turn preventative healthcare appointments into a luxury for that particular day. It may only become a priority when there is an acute need when compared to everything else that had to get done.*

*At the end of the evening we heard from a woman who has lived in poverty for most of her life and she was very candid about her experiences and struggles. I pray for this woman often. She had strength to share her story so that we may put a face with the experience we had all just shared.*

*For me, this was one of those experiences I hope never to forget. I would recommend that if you have the chance you choose to participate in this experience. I have enclosed some thoughts from some others who shared this experience with me. Kelly*

*Life changing! I was a little disappointed at first when I found out that I would be simulating a 5 year old child, but I think the Holy Spirit put me there so I could see the issue of poverty from a child's eyes*

*and be able to carry that with me as a mother and teacher. Liz*

*It was very interesting to go through the poverty simulation and experience true feelings of helplessness, frustration, anxiety, and inadequacy. I was confused by everything and didn't know where to start in an effort to help myself. Things were further complicated by the need for transportation to get to the various agencies, the mountains of paperwork involved in the application processes, and the time constraints. Every time it seemed like I was making progress, I'd run out of time and then would have to start all over again the next day. I was also very much aware of being stereotyped by others. It was a very humbling experience. Amy*

*This was the second Poverty Simulation Workshop I have attended. I had my eyes once again opened to the reality of the impact of poverty on individuals and families. So often I hear about the "poor decisions" made by people on welfare. The simulation showed me how easy it is to make poor decisions based on immediate needs. There was no time to plan and no hope that things would change. Jackie*

**A Revitalized Human Consciousness Across the World****Taken from the book “Our Hearts Still Sing” by Peter Millar**

Imagine shrinking the earth’s population to a village of 100 people with all the existing human ratios remaining the same.

*-The village would have 61 Asians, 12 Europeans, 13 North or South Americans, 13 Africans, and 1 person from Oceania.*

*-There would be 51 females and 49 males.*

*-70 non-whites, 30 whites.*

*-70 non-Christians and 30 Christians.*

*-50% of the village’s wealth would be in the hands of 6 people – all North America citizens.*

*-80 villagers would live in substandard housing.*

*-70 villagers would be unable to read.*

*-50 would suffer from malnutrition.*

*-One villager would have a college education.*

We can argue that statistics have a limited value. Yet this particular statistic about our global community underscores both our total interdependence and the tragic divisions within the human family. We may well ask, “What does God make of it all?” When we consider the world from such a compressed perspective, the need for a creative global vision in each of us becomes glaringly obvious. As one African said, ‘While the wealthy nations are heading for outer space, we are still trying to get a decent road to our village.’

Being a member of the Iona Community has taught me to look squarely at these divisions, and to pray and work for a more humane

global order. There are millions of us engaged in this task, and that is why ‘the people’s voice’ has become of such significance in international affairs. This voice will not go away in the years ahead, nor will the victims of injustice be silenced. A revitalized human consciousness is developing across the world – a fact which must be pleasing to God, if we take these words from Micah seriously:

*The Lord has told us what is good.*

*What he requires of us is this:*

*To do what is just.*

*To show constant love.*

*And to live in humble fellowship with our God.*

*MICAH 6:8*

## POVERTY QUIZ

What is poverty? In economic terms, poverty is defined as a lack of income or resources to meet the basic needs of life. In a broader sense it does not allow people to fulfill their potential and sense of purpose.

The following was taken from the web site endorsing the national goal of reducing poverty by half in 10 years. Catholic Social Teaching says all of us must be involved to care for the most vulnerable. Educating ourselves is the first step.

Poverty in America undermines our country's economic strength, hinders our ability to compete, erodes the health of our communities, and limits opportunities for children and adults. It does not need to be this way. Throughout our history, we have seen periods of dramatic poverty reduction when elected officials and people across the country have come together to secure our economy from the bottom up. How much do you really know about poverty? Take the quiz below.

The federal minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour. Assuming full-time, year-round employment, how much would a parent have to earn to rent a modest, two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent without spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing (the conventional standard for affordable housing)?

- \$7.25 per hour, \$15,080 per year
- \$10.78 per hour, \$22,422 per year
- \$15.22 per hour, \$31,657 per year
- \$18.44 per hour, \$38,360 per year

A parent would need to earn \$18.44 per hour, **more than double the federal minimum wage**, to afford to rent a modest two-bedroom apartment at a fair market rent without exceeding their housing budget. In Wisconsin, the fair market rent for a two bedroom apartment is \$744. In order to afford this level of rent and utilities, a household would have to earn \$29,761 or \$14.31. In Wisconsin the average wage for a renter is \$12.11.

More than 40 million people received food stamp or SNAP benefits in 2009. What was the average daily benefit *per household* in 2009?

- \$30
- \$21
- \$15
- \$9

Households receiving SNAP benefits in 2009 only received about \$9 per day to meet their hunger and nutrition needs.

You can see how much it takes to make ends meet for your area and family type here. In rural Illinois, for example, a single parent with two preschool-age children would need more than \$46,000 to pay for necessities like rent, food, and child care. What is the federal poverty line for a family of four?

- \$18,050
- \$22,050
- \$40,050
- \$60,050

Millions of families across the country struggle to pay for high-cost necessities like food, rent, and child care, but the poverty line is only \$22,050 for a family of four. The official statistics showing 43.6 million Americans living in poverty severely underestimate the number of Americans struggling to make ends meet. In fact, 2009 data show that last year one in three Americans were "low income," meaning they earned less than twice the poverty level. A living wage in Brown County for two adults and two children is \$28.91 an hour. A poverty wage would be \$9.83 an hour. A living wage for one adult and one child is \$17.05 an hour. A poverty wage would be \$6.68 an hour. Minimum wage is \$7.25.

4. How many children live in households struggling with hunger?

- One in six
- One in five
- One in four
- One in three

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nearly one in four children, or 23.3 percent, live in households struggling with hunger. Hunger and food insecurity affect educational performance and health outcomes. Under-nutrition affects children's ability to learn. Chronic hunger therefore results in persistent learning difficulties, which has long-term impacts on children. Hunger also contributes to many health problems, including obesity.

How much does child poverty cost our economy every year?

- \$400 million
- \$500 million
- \$600 million
- \$700 million

A recent Half in Ten-commissioned report by Dr. Harry Holzer found that child poverty costs the economy more than **\$500 billion** a year in lost productivity and increased health care and criminal justice expenditures. Conversely, implementing the principle recommendations from a 2007 CAP report to cut poverty in half in ten years would cost \$90 billion a year.

6. Which racial-ethnic group has the largest number of people living in poverty?

- White/Caucasian
- African American
- Asian American
- Latino

The white/Caucasian group makes up the largest racial-ethnic group living in poverty today despite common (and inaccurate) stereotypes about the demographics of those in poverty. Following this group are Latinos, African Americans, and Asian Americans. African Americans and Latinos, however, suffer disproportionate rates of poverty.

True or false: The number of poor people in the United States is greater than the population of Canada.

- True
- False

Canada's population is approximately 33.7 million people. The number of people living below the poverty line in the United States is 43.6 million, which far surpasses the entire population of Canada.

In which geographic area are numbers of poor residents rising fastest?

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

Center for American Progress report reveals that the largest increase of poor residents is in the nation's suburbs. The gap in median earnings between NY-14, the nation's wealthiest congressional district, and NY-16, one of the country's poorest districts (which is just a few subway stops away), is around...

- \$40,000
- \$30,000
- \$20,000
- \$10,000

According to the 2010-2011 American Human Development Report, the median earnings in one of the wealthiest districts (NY-14) was more than \$60,000 in 2009 while the median earnings in one of the poorest districts (NY-16) was nearly \$18,000 in 2009. The districts are only a few subway stops away from one another, but the gap in median earnings tops \$40,000. In fact, overall income inequality is at its highest levels since before the Great Depression.

If Congress failed to make expansions to the child tax credit permanent by the end of 2010, how much would a parent with two children who works full time in a minimum wage position lose in their tax credit?

- \$500
- \$800
- \$1,000
- \$1500

If Congress fails to make permanent the important expansions of the child tax credit, a parent of two children who works full time at the minimum wage could lose nearly \$1,500 of their tax credit. Such a change would cause more than 18 million kids to lose some or all of their child tax credit and push 600,000 children of working parents into poverty.

Unemployment benefits kept how many Americans out of poverty in 2009?

- 1.3 million
- 2.3 million
- 3.3 million
- 4.3 million

Unemployment benefits were instrumental in keeping 3.3 million jobless Americans out of poverty during the Great Recession. Unemployment insurance is also a job creator, boosting demand in the economy and keeping small businesses open. A new report shows that without the federal unemployment insurance program there would have been 800,000 fewer jobs as of September 2010. Failure to continue providing federal benefits could result in 600,000 fewer jobs by the end of next year.

The TANF Emergency Fund is a \$5 billion fund designed to help states respond to the increased need for services during the recession and create jobs for low-income families in partnership with the private sector. How many subsidized jobs for low-income workers did the TANF Emergency Fund create prior to its expiration on September 30, 2010?

- 250,000
- 200,000
- 150,000
- 100,000

The bipartisan job creation engine, the TANF Emergency Fund, created over 250,000 subsidized jobs for low-

income and long-term unemployed workers prior to its expiration. Unfortunately, Congress let this program expire, meaning that several states are now forced to shut down these successful jobs programs. This pushes more people into unemployment.

13. True or false: The U.S. poverty rate has never fallen by more than a third.

- True
- False

Poverty is not intractable despite (inaccurate) common stereotypes. The U.S. poverty rate fell by more than 40 percent between 1964 and 1973. By rebuilding our economy, creating good jobs, investing in families, and ensuring economic security, we can replicate this success and move millions into the middle class. A 2007 CAP report shows that just four public policies would cut the U.S. poverty rate by 26 percent in 10 years.

How many Americans will experience poverty at some point in their lifetimes?

- One in two
- One in three
- One in four
- One in five

Millions of Americans will experience poverty at some point during their lifetimes, according to a 2007 CAP report. In fact, over a 13-year period, more than one in three people, or 34 percent of all Americans, lived in poverty.

Through proven policy solutions, innovative new ideas, and the engagement of all levels of government, the private sector, and individuals, we can cut U.S. poverty in half by 2020.

Follow the “Half in Ten Campaign” on their web site or on Facebook.