

The Parish Responds to the Economic Downturn



CATHOLIC DIOCESE
OF KALAMAZOO



THE DIOCESE OF KALAMAZOO

Office of the Bishop

Dear Pastor, Parish Coordinator, and Parish Leader,

“Peace be with you!” These are challenging times in Southwest Michigan, in all of Michigan. While we all await what we pray will be a gradual economic recovery, there are many people who are worried, unsure, and tense. Some are losing hope.

In these difficult times, the Church, especially our parishes, need to find ways to respond with pastoral care and loving concern to our people and others in our community. This is the time when we need to listen and be present to each other; live our faith; deepen our hope; and share our love.

To aid you in this vital effort to reach out to your parishioners, I am pleased to share with you the enclosed booklet, “The Parish Responds to the Economic Downturn.” This resource, which was developed by Bishop David L. Ricken’s staff in the Diocese of Green Bay, has been adapted for the Diocese of Kalamazoo with their permission. This booklet has helpful ideas, programs, and resources for you to consider for use in your parish and in your community.

I ask you to please take the time to review the contents of this booklet. I also ask you to discuss this with your parish staff, as well as to schedule time on the agenda of your next Pastoral Council meeting to talk about the effects of the economic downturn on the lives of your parishioners and others in your community. As a result of those discussions, please consider what might be the most effective and concrete ways for your parish to put some particular responses into action. If you have any questions about this booklet, please call Sister Susan Ridley at the Office of Christian Service at 269-349-8714 ext. 238.

In gratitude for all you do for our faithful people and asking God’s blessings upon you as we continue waiting in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ, I am



Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Paul J. Bradley, D.D., M.S.W.
Bishop of Kalamazoo



The Parish Responds to the Economic Downturn A Leadership Resource Booklet

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*The Resource Packet was originally designed by the Diocese of Green Bay, Wisconsin.
It was adapted for the Diocese of Kalamazoo through the cooperation of,*

*Catholic Family Services
Office of Christian Service
Office of Communication*




CATHOLIC DIOCESE
OF KALAMAZOO

August, 2009





The Parish Responds To the Economic Downturn **10 Ideas Worth Considering**

1. Gather the Community – Hold an open meeting at the parish to discuss and brainstorm ways in which the parish could respond to those who are feeling the impact of the economic downturn. Welcome any parishioners interested in helping, members of Pastoral Council, other parish service and leadership groups, all staff, etc. Toward the end of the meeting recruit a small committee of those who may be interested in following through on some of the ideas generated.
 2. Prayer – At weekend liturgies, pray as a community for those who have been impacted. Copy and distribute the special prayer written by Bishop Morneau or any of the other prayers enclosed with this resource packet.
 3. Community Resource Information Sharing – Put notices in parish bulletins and newsletters with information on community services, those offered through charitable organizations, the greater community, food pantries, job services, etc. Organize and distribute a directory of local community services and information.
 4. Encourage Generosity – During times of economic downturn there is a greater need to encourage parishioners to donate funds and goods to local food pantries, St. Vincent de Paul stores and other community agencies that lend a helping hand.
 5. Talking to Person(s) Suffering a Loss – See the enclosed handout. Make copies. Distribute in the bulletin and place in church pamphlet racks.
 6. Organize a Parish Group – Invite those who are seeking employment to meet once a month to share ideas, fellowship and information with one another. (See enclosed information.)
 7. Offer Special Courses – For those who may want to take a good look at how they manage their material goods and/or may want to consider simplifying their lifestyle, there are resources available.
 8. Convene Parish Business Leaders– Invite them to post job openings in the parish bulletin or newsletter. Ask them if they would be willing to help mentor those seeking training and new careers. Recruit leaders who can help prepare resumes and seek employment.
 9. Computer Access – Those searching for employment or applying for benefits often do not have access to the internet. Consider making parish office or school computers available once a week. Recruit volunteers who can help those seeking employment and assistance via the internet.
 10. Parents and Children – Encourage parents to talk to their children and the impact of the economy on their lives. Children hear more than we are aware. They need to be reassured that they will be safe and taken care of.
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Worship & Prayer Resources

Sacramentary

Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions When permitted by Ordo

#21 FOR THE PROGRESS OF PEOPLES

References: justice, equality, peace in society

#22 FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

References: work for peace, brotherly love, creation, harmony, unity

25 FOR THE BLESSING OF HUMAN LABOR

References: duty of work, growth in this life, perfecting work of creation, provision for food

#26 FOR PRODUCTIVE LAND

Reference: abundance of harvest, fruitful work, bless harvest

#39 IN THANKSGIVING

References: mercy in suffering, thanks for kindness, renew strength, sacrifice of praise

Ideas for Use with General Intercessions

Based on ideas in “Worship, Liturgy of the Hours” GIA Publications, Inc., Chicago

Optional preface phrase: For all seeking employment---

Optional preface phrase: For all needing hope in economic difficulties--

--That we will live devoutly and temperately in this life as we wait in joyful hope for the revelation of your glory...

--That the seed of justice you planted among your people will manifest in mercy and holiness....

--That the work of our hands will bless all of creation...

--That we will wait in joyful hope as we persevere through economic needs....

--That we, the branches of Jesus, the true vine, will bear much fruit for the betterment of our world...

--That the new life You gave to our human condition will receive fullness in spirit and body....

--That You who were born within time to experience our day-to-day life will be our hope....

--That we will share concern for the good of all...

--That we will work together and help one another...

OTHER PRAYERS

From “Worship, Liturgy of the Hours” GIA Publications, Inc., Chicago

The alternative prayers and the English translation of the prayer from The Roman Missal @ 1973, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc. All rights reserved.

Page 224

Father in heaven, Creator of all,
Look down upon your people in their moments of need,
for you alone are the source of our peace.
Bring us to the dignity which distinguishes the poor in spirit
and show us how great is the call to serve,
that we may share in the peace of Christ
who offered his life in the service of all.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Page 226

Father,
guide us, as you guide creation
according to your law of love.
May we love one another
and come to perfection
in the eternal life prepared for us.
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Page 230

Father in heaven,
the hand of your loving kindness
powerfully yet gently guides all the moments of our day.
Go before us in our pilgrimage of life,
anticipate our needs and prevent our falling.
Send your Spirit to unite us in faith,
that sharing in your service,
we may rejoice in your presence.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Page 235

Father in heaven, God of power and Lord of mercy,
from whose fullness we have received,
direct our steps in our everyday efforts.
May the changing moods of the human heart
and the limits which our failings impose on hope
never blind us to you, source of every good.
Faith gives us the promise of peace
and makes known the demands of love.
Remove the selfishness that blurs the vision of faith.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.

A Prayer During Times of Economic Downturn

By Bishop Robert Morneau

God of compassion,
you know the struggles of the
human heart.

You journey with us through
good and difficult times.

Send your Spirit of

perseverance and hope

upon us during this time of

economic crisis

so that when we are

discouraged, we may find

hope,

when we are anxious, we

might trust your providence,

when we are empty and afraid,

we might experience your

loving presence.

Your Son Jesus walked our

world and knew hunger and

rejection, fear and

abandonment, suffering and

even death.

Yet, he did your will and

embraced the cross in loving

obedience.

May we follow his example by

placing all our hope in you,

by loving those who are less

fortunate,

and by putting our faith in

your promise of eternal life.

We make our prayer through

Jesus our Lord. Amen.

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Ways to Respond to the Economic Downturn

- 1) Pray daily for those most affected by the economic downturn.
- 2) Stay connected to people who are unemployed and underemployed, people can become isolated.
- 3) Be generous with your talent, time, and treasure to local food pantries and food banks.
- 4) Have a yard sale and give the proceeds to a local charity.
- 5) Find ways to live more simply.
- 6) Connect with volunteer opportunities in your parish, community, and diocese.
- 7) Ask yourself what kind of random acts of kindness can you do.



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215 N. Westmedge Ave.
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269-349-8714

www.dioceseofkalamazoo.org

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Thoughts on Organizing a Parish Group

In these days of bad economic news, it is more important than ever to remember that we are a Church of the Good News. We have been promised that "... where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst." (Matthew 18:20) Jesus is our Hope and our Salvation. In these days of broken promises, it is important to focus on the hope and promises that we know will never be broken.

One of the ideas suggested by Sojourner Magazine is to form within our parishes "Community Security Clubs" bringing people together for support, prayer, and to hold on to the Good News.

In the Community Security Club give the participants the opportunity to share job search tips, survival tips and places others can go for individual help. Bring together the resources of your parish communities. If you have parishioners who are career counselors, high school or college counselors, or human resource professionals, they could be tapped as guest speakers on interviewing, job search, career theory, etc. Use some of the suggested resources found in "Additional Resources" in this booklet. But most of all, listen to the needs of the people in your group, help them identify the skills, strengths and gifts that God has given them – and of course, pray with them and allow them to talk about how God is walking with them, even in difficult times."

Each parish Community Security Club will have a unique identity depending on the resources and interests of the parishioners. They can be autonomous or affiliated with programs that already exist like local charitable organizations. The whole concept of the Community Security Club is to determine what "we can do together" to support one another. Some programs will extend into workshops on how to interview for a job, resume preparation, employment bulletins, helping one another with home repairs, weatherization, food buying clubs, and budget counseling.

As Chuck Collins stated in Sojourners magazine: "As our economy continues to decline, 'Community Security Clubs' are one way people can support each other and take action for a more just future."

Sojourners suggests three main functions of a Community Security Club:

1. Learn and Reflect – Through various forms of media, reading, Bible studies, participants will deepen their knowledge and understanding of the economic forces that affect all of our lives. Why is the economy in distress? How did these changes happen? Ultimately tying these questions into deeper reflection on the real sources of security in our lives.
2. Mutual aid and local action – Using various tools, those attending reflect on what makes them secure. What can we do together to increase our economic security at a local level? How do I personally deal with my financial challenges? How do I get out of debt? Can I downscale and reduce my consumption to reduce spending and be more earth friendly?
3. Social Action – What can we do together to build an economy based on building healthy communities through secure public policies?

While our parishes cannot be a bank for our members, there are so many things that we can develop to “support one another”. There is so much pain in our parish communities. This is an opportunity to reach out and walk with one another in and through the pain. It is what Jesus calls us to do. We become the Good News.

For more information visit www.soj.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0902&article=we-re-in-this-together.





Resources for Our Diocese's Nine Counties

Services for all 9 Counties

State of Michigan
Unemployment Insurance Agency
1-866-500-0017
www.michigan.gov/uia/

Allegan County

Michigan Works
2891 116th Avenue
Allegan, MI 49010
269-686-5079
www.michiganworkska.org

Department of Human Services
3255 122nd Street, Ste. 3000
Allegan, MI 49010
269-673-7700
www.michigan.gov

Barry County

Michigan Works
535 West Woodlawn
Hastings, MI 49058
269-945-9545
www.calhounisd.org

Department of Human Services
430 Barfield Drive
Hastings, MI 49058
269-948-3200
www.michigan.gov

Berrien County

Michigan Works
499 W. Main St
Benton Harbor, MI 49022
269-927-1799
www.miworks.org

Berrien County continued

Department of Human Services
PO Box 1407, 401 8th St
Benton Harbor, MI 49022
269-934-2000
www.michigan.gov

Branch County

Michigan Works
210 Vista Dr
Coldwater, MI 49036
517-278-0200
www.calhounisd.org

Department of Human Services
388 Keith Wilhelm Dr
Coldwater, MI 49036
517-279-4200
www.michigan.gov


Calhoun County

Michigan Works
101 N. Albion St
Albion, MI 49224
517-629-5852
www.calhounisd.org

Department of Human Services
190 E. Michigan Ave, PO Box 490
Battle Creek, MI 49016
269-966-1284
www.michigan.gov

Cass County

Michigan Works
601-D N. Front Street
Dowagiac, MI 49047
269-782-9864
www.miworks.org





Resources for Our Diocese's Nine Counties

Cass County (continued)

Department of Human Services
325 M-62
Cassopolis, MI 49031
269-445-0200
www.michigan.gov

Kalamazoo County

Catholic Family Services
1819 Gull Road
Kalamazoo, MI 49048
269-381-9800
www.catholicfamilyservices.org/

Michigan Works
1601 S. Burdick St
Kalamazoo, MI 49001
269-383-2536
www.upjohninst.org/miworks

Department of Human Services
322 E. Stockbridge
Kalamazoo, MI 49001
269-337-4900
www.michigan.gov

St Joseph County

Michigan Works
16587 Enterprise Dr
Three Rivers, MI 49093
269-273-2717
www.upjohninst.org/miworks

Department of Human Services
692 East Main St
Centreville, MI 49032
269-467-1200
www.michigan.gov

Van Buren County

Michigan Works
32849 Red Arrow Highway
Paw Paw, MI 49079
269-657-7014
www.miworks.org

Department of Human Services
57150 CR 681, PO Box 7
Hartford, MI 49057
269-621-2800
www.michigan.gov

Regional

Problem Resolution Office
Unemployment Insurance Agency Office
3391 Plainfield, NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49501-0169
1-866-500-0017 press option 3

State

Michigan Department of Community Health
www.michigan.gov/mdch

National

The Substance Abuse & Mental Health
Service Administration
“Getting Through Tough Economic Times”
www.samhsa.gov/economy/

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
1-800-273-8255 for help
www.afsp.org

Avoiding Foreclosure – U.S. Department
of Housing and Urban Development
www.hud.gov/foreclosure/



Getting Through Tough Economic Times

The recent financial downturn in our country has affected all of us in one way or another. Many people affected by this economic shift will cope well, struggle through, and survive these hard times. But we need to realize that each of us is affected differently and be aware of how others are affected.

As Catholics and parish communities we believe in the “Life and dignity of the human person.” We must reach out and listen to others. We must be signs of Christ’s hope and love.

“Getting Through Tough Economic Times” is a guide that provides advice to all of us on how to deal with the effects financial difficulties can have on our physical and mental health. It covers:

- Possible health risks
- Warning signs
- Managing stress
- Getting help
- Suicide warning signs
- Other steps you can take

This guide is available at The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration at www.samhsa.gov/economy/. This website has a variety of valuable information and resources.

Some people become so depressed that they feel they have no reason to go on living. They have lost all hope, and may consider suicide. Suicide can be prevented. While some suicides occur without any warning, most people who are suicidal do give warnings. Prevent the suicide of loved ones by learning the signs of someone at risk, taking these signs seriously, and knowing how to respond to them.

Warning signs of suicide include:

- Observable signs of serious depression
- Increased alcohol and/or other drug use
- Recent impulsiveness and taking unnecessary risks
- Threatening suicide or expressing a strong wish to die
- Making a plan
- Unexpected rage or anger

If you or someone you care about are having suicidal thoughts or showing these warning signs, **seek immediate help**. Contact your/their healthcare provider, mental health crisis center, hospital emergency room or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273 TALK (8255) for help. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention has excellent information and resources at www.afsp.org/.



**Ideas of What to Include in a Resource Packet
for the Unemployed/underemployed in Your Parish Area
(You may want to do this as a joint project with other nearby parishes.)**

1. Catholic Family Services,

www.catholicfamilyservices.org/

- a. Bridges mental health counseling services
- b. Caring Network services to pregnant women
- c. The Ark services for youth, homeless, runaway
- d. Baraga Manor located in Otsego (**Allegan County**)
 - Independent living apartments for seniors



2. Employment Assistance

- a. Clothing for Interviews
 - Whatever shops in your areas that help with this
- b. Government Agencies
 - City, County, State & Federal
 - That helps with job retraining and with searching for a job in your area of expertise, etc.
- c. Job Board Websites
 - There are county and other government websites that can be listed.
- d. Job Support Groups
 - Your parish or other organizations may be offering this in your area. List its' purpose and contact information.

3. Financial/Food Resources

- a. St. Vincent de Paul Society
- b. Food Banks, Food Pantries
- c. Salvation Army
- d. Department of Human Services
 - Food Stamps
- e. Utility Companies
 - for Energy Assistance
 - Diocesan Heating Assistance Program (January - March)
- f. Temporary Housing
- g. Crisis Centers

MIChild is health insurance you need at a price you can afford.

Call **1-888-988-6300** or apply online at <https://healthcare4mi.com/michild-web>. This is **health insurance** and **dental care insurance** for children under 18 (some adults also are eligible) at premiums of \$10 a month per family.

If you have more than one child, it still only costs \$10 a month.

4. Legal Aid

- a. Lawyer referrals
- b. Legal Aid

5. Medical Assistance

- a. Department of Human Services
- b. County Community Mental Health Agency

6. Selling Personal Items


- a. **E-Bay** – www.ebay.com, click on sell in top menu
- b. **Craigs List** – www.craigslist.com, click on Michigan
- c. **Yard Sales** – Ask family and friends to give YOU their donations instead of to Goodwill or other organizations and have several yard sales to make money.



Helping Someone Through Job Loss

Losing a job is one of the five most stressful life changes you can experience. When we think about job loss, our thoughts usually go to practical issues, like paying the bills. Job loss also has an emotional impact because when someone loses their job not only do they lose their income but for most people they lose their identity. Our identity and the way others see us is often influenced by our jobs. In fact, some people describe losing a job as “losing a part of my self”.

The loss of a job involves the grieving process and your loved one will need to experience the various stages of grief, which include denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. There is no exact time period for working through the stages, but there are some things that you can do to help your loved one during this process:

- Encourage your loved one to talk. Be sure to listen openly and actively.
 - He/She may want a little space to work things out. Be respectful of his/her wishes. Don't pry needlessly or provide unsolicited advice.
 - Encourage your loved one to stay involved with family, friends, hobbies, etc. Don't let his/her embarrassment or concern about the job loss lead to unhealthy isolation.
 - Offer to help with the job search and then back off. You may be understandably concerned about his/her personal financial situation, but pressuring someone who is already pressuring his/herself is unproductive.
 - Practical day-to-day help, such as helping with chores or errands, is important. Rather than just asking if there is anything you can do, offer to do things you know need to be done.
 - Be alert for signs of depression. Eating, drinking, or sleeping too much or too little, along with a consistently depressed mood, may be signs he/she needs more help than you can provide. Encourage your loved one to seek help in order to deal with the symptoms of depression before they can become worse.
- 



Additional Resources

Catholic Social Teaching and the Economy

1. A great deal of information and a variety of resources can be found by going to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' website at www.usccb.org/sdwp/. There in the middle, click on Catholic Teaching on Economic Life. Once there on the menu on the left click on a variety of items, e.g.
 - Catholic Teaching
 - Ten Important Principles
 - Economic Justice Quiz
 - Ways to Get Involved
 - Prayer Resources

Book

1. "Fired Up: How to Win When You Lose Your Job" by Will La Vest, order number WW475577. This can be purchased at www.christianbooks.com for \$11.99.


Pamphlet

1. "Living Abundantly in Difficult Financial Times," order no. 978-1-59276-567-6. Our Sunday Visitor www.osv.com \$14.95 per pack of 50 (price break after 2 packs).

Resources for Parishes

1. "Unemployment & the Economic Crisis: A Congregational Toolkit"
From Interfaith Worker Justice
Includes the following:
 - The Spiritual Meaning of the Economic Crisis
 - So You've Lost Your Job – a Guide to your Rights
 - Coming Together in a Time of Crisis - How to Form a Support Group
 - How Your Congregation Can Act to Support Workers – Contact Information
 - Be Strong and Have Courage in Turbulent Times – a Reading
 - In Difficult Times – a Responsive Prayer
 - In This Time of Economic Crisis – a Responsive Prayer

Download Toolkit for Free from www.iwj.org

2. "A Recession Survival Guide"
From US Catholic
Includes news stories, spiritual support and a blog.
www.uscatholic.org/node/1507
- 



Articles & Ideas

1. Article “We’re In This Together” by Chuck Collins, Sojourners Magazine, February 2009, (requires free registration for web articles).
www.sojournal.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0902&article=we-re-in-this-together
2. Article “Addressing the Economic Crisis with Faith” by Amata Miller, IHM – Network Lobby, pp. 4-6. www.networklobby.org/connection/connection09janfeb.pdf
3. Article “Parish Ministries Give Assistance to Unemployed” by Scott Alessi; Our Sunday Visitor, Newsweekly, February 1, 2009.
www.osv.com/OSVNav/OSVNewsweeklyFebruary12009/Parishministriesgiveassistancetounemployed/tabid/7559/Default.aspx
4. Various Articles and Resources “The 2009 recession Survival Guide” US Catholic Magazine.
www.uscatholic.org/node/1507
5. Pastoral Letter – “The Church Sharing – A Pastoral Letter to the Church of Pittsburgh on the Economic Crisis” by Bishop David A. Zubik.
www.diopitt.org/pastoral_thechurchsharing.pdf
6. Pastoral Letter “Christ Our Hope” – A Pastoral Letter on the Economy” by Cardinal Adam Maida (Advent Resource).
www.aodonline.org/aodonline-sqlimages/economic/coh/081207christourhope.pdf

Other Resources

1. American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Magazine, lots of information and many excellent articles at www.aarpmagazine.org
Includes:
 - Job Search, <http://jobs.aarp.org/>
 - “Preparing Your Cover Letter and Resume,” in search in upper right hand corner type in this title at www.aarpmagazine.org
 - Work – www.aarp.org/money/work/

Information Referral Services

1. **2-1-1 is a telephone information referral service that is available in the 9 counties of the Kalamazoo Diocese. Dial 2-1-1, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in order to find local resources that provide necessary social services to people in need.**
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