

## Rejoice in the Lord

By Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.  
Archbishop of Newark

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### Reflection

#### Recognizing Jesus in the faces of the poor

Pope Saint John Paul II once wrote, “The needs of the poor take priority over the desires of the rich.” As a relative newcomer to the state of New Jersey, I have been challenged to be more attentive to the ways in which poverty has an impact on the individuals, families, and communities that I am called to serve here in Bergen, Essex, Hudson, and Union counties.

The social and economic conditions caused by poverty in these communities, and throughout our state and nation, have had serious consequences, including an increase in the manufacture, sale, and use of drugs; violence in our homes and in our streets; and the resulting increase in our prison population.

Multigenerational poverty, measured by the number of individuals in economic stress whose parents, grandparents, and perhaps great-grandparents also suffered severe economic instability, is a very serious issue. Its impact on human dignity, family stability, and healthy communities is immeasurable. Individual family members who experience multigenerational poverty are far less likely to possess the internal, intangible resources that will allow them to realize their hopes and dreams or to pursue and acquire the education, life skills, and employment opportunities that are available to other members of their communities and that are critical to breaking the cycle of poverty. Without the skills and experiences necessary to make positive personal and employment decisions, poor choices appear predetermined, and the vicious cycle of poverty remains unbroken.

The Gospels show us that our Lord had a special love for the poor. He recognized their suffering, and he had compassion for their loneliness and fear. He never looked away from their plight or



acted like it didn't concern him. Always, our Lord stood with the poor—comforting their sorrows, healing their wounds, and feeding their bodies and their souls.

All disciples of Jesus Christ are called to love the poor as he did. We are invited, and challenged, to see the poor, to illuminate the reality of poverty, and to respond with transformed hearts.

We believe that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God; that each life is sacred, from conception to natural death; and that human dignity comes from who we are as persons rather than from what we do or what we possess. We believe that all people should enjoy a quality of life commensurate with the demands of human dignity. That's why the social teaching of our Church welcomes the poor and oppressed as members of the family of God who deserve a voice in their future. Christ taught that those with the greatest need should be attended to first. By his words and example, he showed us that caring for the poor is both a matter of justice and of charity.

Catholics in all regions of our archdiocese are deeply committed to serving those who are in immediate need through our Catholic Charities agencies and our parishes, schools, and health care organizations. The generosity of our people is extraordinary, making possible thousands of hours of love and service every week in all regions of our archdiocese. As archbishop, I recognize and applaud the goodness of diverse people and institutions, and I thank God for the love and compassion shown to so many of our brothers and sisters in their time of serious need.

I also know that much more is needed. What can you and I do to help alleviate poverty—both now and in the future? We can “storm heaven” with confidence that our prayers will be heard and answered. We can work to strengthen families. We can advocate for economic vitality and for access to affordable top-quality education and health care. And we can support Catholic Charities through generous and sacrificial gifts of time, talent, and treasure!

As Christians, we are called to recognize Jesus in the face of the poor. Seeing our brothers and sisters as they are—members of God's family who have gifts to share with us and who compel us to share our gifts in return—is an essential element of Christian charity. Seeing ourselves as stewards of all God's gifts is integral to authentic Christian discipleship.

Let's acknowledge the poverty all around us. Let's respond with open and generous hearts to the immediate and long-term needs of our brothers and sisters. And let's recognize Christ in all who are poor, vulnerable, and in need of our love.

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph W. Tobin" with a cross at the beginning.

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.  
Archbishop of Newark

# The Six Pillars of *Forward in Faith Together: Our Road Ahead*



FORWARD IN *Faith* TOGETHER  
*Our Road Ahead*



Protection of the Faithful	Accountability, Transparency, and Communication	Archdiocesan Pastoral Planning	Lifelong Faith Formation and Education	Ongoing Formation/Support of Clergy	Active Engagement of the Laity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforce protections already in place and create new training and reporting programs.</li> <li>Support and comfort victim survivors of clergy sexual abuse.</li> <li>Continue to apply a just Independent Victims Compensation Program.</li> <li>Maintain a proactive policy of transparency and accountability.</li> <li>Continue full and proactive collaboration with law enforcement and state/local officials.</li> <li>Enhance the Archdiocesan Review Board.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply outcomes of a communications audit to enhance internal and external connections.</li> <li>Widen communications channels to and from parishes and the Chancery.</li> <li>Improve reporting structures and set more consistent annual performance reviews for all.</li> <li>Spread a culture that embraces spirituality of stewardship.</li> <li>Broaden transparency of operations and finance.</li> <li>Complete technology evaluations and make improvements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete assessments to reorganize the Chancery in greater service to the Archdiocesan mission.</li> <li>Finalize clear priorities for implementation at all levels of the Archdiocese.</li> <li>Fortify structures that more effectively support and drive our mission.</li> <li>Empower and guide each parish to adopt and realize the Archdiocesan plan according to the needs of their own parish communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to evaluate and reorganize the stages of lifelong faith formation.</li> <li>Create and support initiatives for the faithful to flourish in the human spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral aspects of their lives.</li> <li>Reinforce the role of the family.</li> <li>Enrich schools of the Archdiocese to sustain continuous religious education.</li> <li>Develop opportunities for stronger, continuous engagement of adults and young adults in the faith.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen and reaffirm our continued commitment to the life-long ministry of our bishops, priests, and deacons.</li> <li>Continue to invite and address concerns of morale among our clergy.</li> <li>Fortify the image of the priestly vocation to re-emphasize a life of spiritual and service leadership to others.</li> <li>Bring together bishops, priests, and deacons to reflect, strengthen, and seek recommendations to improve our witness to the priesthood of Jesus Christ.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add more incisive leadership roles for laity in the Archdiocese.</li> <li>Engage laity to address challenges and reshape the future of the Archdiocese.</li> <li>Encourage greater input from and participation by laity.</li> <li>Ensure that financial and pastoral councils exist and function effectively in every parish.</li> <li>Invest in ongoing training and development.</li> </ul>

The work of *Forward in Faith Together* is supported by six key pillars, each representing an area of action that calls for our renewed energy. They are: Protection of the Faithful; Accountability, Transparency, and Communication; Archdiocesan Pastoral Planning; Lifelong Faith Formation and Education; Ongoing Formation/Support of Clergy; and Active Engagement of the Laity.

Please visit online to learn more: [Forward.RCAN.org](http://Forward.RCAN.org)

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## A Message from Pope Francis: Words of Challenge and Hope



As in a hunt, the poor are trapped, captured, and enslaved. As a result, many of them become disheartened, hardened, and anxious only to drop out of sight.

Daily we encounter families forced to leave their homeland to seek a living elsewhere; orphans who have lost their parents or were violently torn from them by brutal means of exploitation; young people seeking professional fulfillment but prevented from employment by shortsighted economic policies; victims of different kinds of

violence, ranging from prostitution to the narcotics trade, and profoundly demeaned.

We can never elude the urgent appeal that Scripture makes on behalf of the poor. To refuse to identify Jesus with those who are oppressed and the downcast is to falsify the Gospel and water down God's revelation. (Message for the third Church-sponsored World Day of the Poor)

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### My Prayer for You

My prayer for the Archdiocese of Newark is that God will grant us unity (communion with him and with each other), effective preaching and pastoral care, and lives transformed by a deep, fully formed faith.

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.

