

Canada is facing a grave moral crisis in the huge and growing gap that exists between the rich and the poor in this country. Despite continued economic growth, development of new resources, building of new infrastructure and the creation of jobs and opportunities, there seems to be a very few who are benefiting from all this prosperity. Over the past forty years we have seen the so-called 'middle class' working people taking two and three of these jobs and still struggle to maintain their homes. The numbers of people coming to our food banks are growing. Seniors come to shopping centres, not to buy, but to keep warm for they cannot afford to properly heat their homes. Our faith informs us that we have a moral imperative to find a fairer sharing of the tremendous resources of this country. As people of faith, it is not enough for us to recognize this problem and mourn such tragedy, we must act to rectify it!

How can we act?

1. Vote! We must exercise this precious means of making our voices heard. Voting is a right for which our brothers and sisters in troubled areas of the world today are fighting and putting their lives at risk. We honour them and prove the value of this freedom of choice when we participate in our democratic process. It is a moral imperative for you to vote in this election.
2. Speak to your local candidates when they visit or go to listen to them at rallies. Ask them how they will stop this widening gap between rich and poor. Make this issue - the growing gap between rich and poor - the issue that determines your vote.
3. Look at all the policies that are presented to you by our federal parties and their candidates and ask them to explain these promises in terms of how they will have an impact on narrowing the gap between rich and poor.

One of the tools we have at our disposal is the website, Candidates Against Poverty (www.candidatesagainstopoverty.ca, *this could be read out, published in a church bulletin for that weekend, placed on fliers or posters in the church or all of these*). It was created by people of various faith traditions, including our own, who came together, put aside any differences and saw that we are all stewards of creation and have a responsibility to fairly share the bounty of this creation. Through the website, we ask all the candidates of all parties across this great country to pledge that, if they are elected, they will do all that they can to work towards eliminating poverty and narrowing this gap between the rich and poor. Go to this website. See if your candidates have pledged. If they have, ask them what this means to them. If they have not, ask them why.

Make ending poverty and once again fairly sharing the riches of our country a real priority in this election.

Scripture texts from the Common Lectionary for Sunday, 9 April, 2011

Ezekiel 37: 1-14 Thus says the Lord God: "I am going to open up your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel." [*As God's servants we must open up the mistakes of our past that have buried our people in poverty and bring all God's people to the land and life which God promised.*]

Psalm 130 (*de profundis*) Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. [*We cry out from the depths of*

the injustice of poverty and inequity and ask that forgiveness come through our efforts to share the bounty of God's creation.]

Romans 8:8-11 If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. [*If our faith is real, then the sinfulness of the great gap existing between rich and poor, can be overcome by bringing about real life through the righteousness of the Spirit.]*

John 11: 1-45 The raising of Lazarus from the dead. [*Jesus wept out of sorrow for his friend and family. But that wasn't enough. He allowed his sorrow to move him to do God's will and brought new life to Lazarus and joy to the community.]*