



In this final week of lent and self examination, we reflect on the effects of our individual sins—how, over time, they tend to compound and form systems seemingly beyond our control that enable, encourage, and facilitate social sin and oppression. Social sin is subtle and complex and slower to eradicate than individual sin. Yet, Christ calls us to change socially as well as individually. We are taught to hope in resurrection. For this reason, we cannot abandon the poorest of the poor, even when their recovery appears against all odds.

Often pleas for the less fortunate fall on deaf ears or are met with a healthy dose of cynicism. But, impoverished people worldwide depend on support from wealthy governments, the U.N. and private business to eliminate debt and provide basic necessities. By serving those most in need and establishing lasting global partnerships, we can help the poor recapture and sustain the dignity of life.

Effective aid (or development assistance) is not a pit. At its best, effective aid helps foster independence and builds stronger, more self-sufficient communities in the long run. Aid becomes ineffective when it is redirected or given for the wrong reasons. To avoid such pitfalls, world leaders committed to the Millennium Development Goals for the poorest nations:

- 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty & Hunger
- 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education
- 3: Promote Gender Equality; Empower Women
- 4: Reduce Child Mortality
- 5: Improve Maternal Health
- 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria & Other Diseases
- 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability
- 8: Develop a Global Development Partnership

Yet, many nations are not on track to meet the goals, and over 65% are in Sub-Saharan Africa. To reverse this trend, the world community must support and fully fund existing pledges to increase the quantity and quality of assistance (e.g., the U.S. Millennium Challenge Account).

Additionally, strings cannot be attached. Aid is often 'tied' to the interests of the lending government, preventing the poor from obtaining the best value for their money. According to one World Bank survey, tied aid reduces the quality of assistance by nearly 20%. The Catholic community must unite to eliminate "tied aid" and improve coordination between donor and recipient nations so that the poorest people participate in decision making.

**Advocate.** Answer Christ's call! Support:

- The Millennium Campaign  
[www.millenniumcampaign.org](http://www.millenniumcampaign.org)
- The Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty  
[www.usccb.org/sdwp/globalpoverty/](http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/globalpoverty/)