



## PEACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE

*Who is Rich & Who is Poor*

*A Day in Domestic Poverty*

We continue our series: **“Who is Rich & Who is Poor.”** Hopefully, this series will help define poverty nationally and globally and prepare the parish for the Church’s Lenten mission on extreme poverty.

Last week we published a quiz on domestic poverty. Today we reflect on what it would be like to live poverty for a day—in America.

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From the relative comfort of upper middle-class life, it’s hard to imagine how each day could become a struggle to survive. Try this simple exercise:

**You are a single parent of a toddler and have many things to accomplish today.**

Your annual salary is \$12,207 — right at the government’s poverty threshold for a two person household. At that salary level, you have \$32.52 in your pocket to pay for the day’s food, transportation, day care and other bills. Let’s make ends meet...

**It’s 8 a.m.** You’re hungry, and so is your daughter. Where can you eat something that won’t wipe you out? A fast food breakfast for two costs \$3 (you drink water so your daughter can have juice).

**Doctor visit.** It’s time to take care of that terrible ear infection that kept your daughter up all night. The clinic charges \$5 co-pay for the visit, plus \$5 for the prescription.

**New Job!** You need a new pair of shoes for the job you’re going to start tomorrow. You find a great sale at a discount store, \$10. Don’t forget the bus fare of \$1. Luckily children ride free.

Who will watch your daughter while you work? You called several day care providers along the route to your new job and found one with an opening. You hop back on the bus to check it out, \$1. The woman says you have to pay her for at least the first three days of care, but thankfully that can wait until tomorrow. Tomorrow you will need \$35.

**It’s 2:00 p.m.** by the time you finish and neither of you has eaten since breakfast. For your last meal of the day, you splurge at the grocery store to buy milk—you can only afford a half gallon, bread, eggs and some cereal—a less expensive store brand than your daughter had picked, \$5.90. (The woman ahead of you in line who has a cart filled with food.) The bus fare home is another \$1.

**It’s 7:00 p.m.** With only 62¢ left, without a TV or radio for entertainment, you go to bed early.

**In 2005, (the latest full-year statistics available), total Americans below the official poverty thresholds numbered 37 million.**

Excerpted: Catholic Campaign for Human Development [www.usccb.org/cchd/povertyusa/pressrel/prstory3.htm](http://www.usccb.org/cchd/povertyusa/pressrel/prstory3.htm)