



Rochester Diocese Lent Course 2015

Challenging Poverty



5: What next?

Background Information

The UN Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight international development goals established after the UN Millennium Summit in 2000 and the adoption of the UN Millennium Declaration. All 189 UN member states at the time (there are currently 193) and at least 23 international organisations committed themselves to helping achieve the following Millennium Development Goals by 2015:

- 1 To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- 2 To achieve universal primary education
- 3 To promote gender equality and empower women
- 4 To reduce child mortality
- 5 To improve maternal health
- 6 To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- 7 To ensure environmental sustainability
- 8 To develop a global partnership for development.

For further information, see:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millennium_Development_Goals

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsproposal.html>

Poverty in the UK

A household is considered to be in poverty if its net income is less than 60 per cent of the national median. By this measure, in 2011/12, 13 million people in the UK (nearly one in five of the population) were estimated to be living in poverty. The figure includes 3.5 million children.

The story of St Francis

Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) was the son of a wealthy cloth merchant who helped his father in his business and lived a normal life for someone in his position. In his mid-20s, he was deeply affected by beggars he encountered in Rome and was moved to compassion by a leper he met and embraced near Assisi. In these encounters he discerned the call of God. Although heir to the family wealth, he was willing to be disowned by his father. Breaking with his old friends, he devoted himself to rebuilding the church of Christ.

One morning at Mass, Francis heard a reading from Matthew Chapter 10 in which Jesus asks his disciples to leave everything behind in order to proclaim the Kingdom of God. He saw this as a personal call, so set aside his staff and shoes, put on a long, rough garment, tied a cord around his waist and set out to save souls. Soon a group of like-minded men was following him.

Responding to God's call, Francis **chose** a life of poverty. His was not an easy life, but he saw it as characterised by joy and he's known as the joyful saint. Deliberately choosing poverty and simplicity and freeing himself from worldly riches, he was able to appreciate more fully the riches that come from a relationship with God. St Francis saw his poverty as wealth.

Rochester Diocese Lent Course 2015 **Challenging Poverty**

5: What next? *Background Information*

The story of Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Archbishop Desmond Tutu speaks of how he was deeply affected as a child when his parish priest, Father Trevor Huddleston, raised his hat in greeting to Tutu's mother. Such respect being shown by a European to an African woman was unknown. Huddleston's gesture was an important stage in Tutu's journey, teaching him that he need not accept discrimination and that religion could be a powerful tool for advancing racial equality.

What next? Suggestions on Questions 1-3

Question 1

Consider fasting, regular prayer for the poor and/or supporting an organisation that seeks to combat poverty.

Question 2

Are your church buildings and churchyards managed in ways that are environmentally friendly?

Within the diocese, **Poverty and Hope** supports development projects which help communities around the world to escape the poverty trap. For more details, see www.rochester.anglican.org under 'Diocese' or contact:

Debbie and David Cooper
6 Calverley Park
Tunbridge Wells
Kent TN1 2SH

Tel: 01892 527611
E-mail: Povertyandhope@gmail.com

The diocese has links with Kondoa and Mpwapwa in Tanzania and Harare in Zimbabwe, as well as with Estonia. These enable churches, school and communities in Rochester diocese to form enriching relationships with Christians in other parts of the world, enabling us to support each other in prayer and relationships. If you'd like to establish a link or find out more, please contact:

Mike Fawcett
Partner Diocese Link Coordinator
Diocese of Rochester

Tel: 01892 536704
Mobile: 07879 231830
Email: mikefawcett1957@gmail.com

Question 3

If you haven't already done so after last week's session, what about writing to your local MP about particular concerns you may have? As the election approaches, such letters could place the issues higher on the national agenda.

The Rochester Diocese 'Challenging Poverty' programme continues in 2015. For details of upcoming events, see www.rochester.anglican.org via Noticeboard.

Copyright acknowledgement

Some material from the course notes is copyright © The Archbishops' Council 2000.