



# EYE ON JUSTICE

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**SISTERS AND ASSOCIATES  
ST. JOSEPH OF LYON/ WINSLOW**

## HUNGER IN OUR MIDST

During this holiday season, let us remember the people in our midst and around the world who are hungry. In a recent survey conducted by a social service agency in the state of New York, the people who took a TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) survey said that they have accepted this as a part of life to survive, besides having to go to food pantries and soup kitchens to survive. They know that TANF will not cover all their expenses, and they need to be creative to make ends meet. Many of them sacrifice not eating, eating less and not eating balanced meals to stretch whatever they have. *No one should have to go hungry in this country, but they do*, says a multi-service social agency in N. Y.

NETWORK'S 15-year review of TANF states the following key findings:

- Despite their poverty, only 33% of those interviewed received government assistance in 1997.
- Many struggle to meet basic needs as people left welfare rolls for low-paying jobs that provide little economic security for their families.
- Insufficient incomes are far below the poverty line, with 47% reporting annual incomes of less than \$8,500.
- An unrealistic poverty line means that 34% are not meeting basic necessities and still have to seek emergency facilities.
- Of the many people living without employment or the support of public benefits are 37% of married couples often having only one unemployed.
- 40% of Latinos had higher unemployment rates and never received cash assistance.

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### INJUSTICE IN OUR PLATES

An estimated 4.1 million undocumented women are among the most vulnerable workers in our society today. They typically earn minimum wage or less, get no sick or vacation days, and receive no health insurance. They fill the lowest working jobs in our economy and provide the backbreaking labor that helps bring food to our tables. Yet they are routinely cheated out of wages and subjected to an array of other abuses in the workplace. They are generally powerless to enforce their rights or protect themselves. Legalizing undocumented workers would raise the U.S. gross domestic product by \$1.5 trillion over a decade. On the other hand, if the government were to deport all 10.8 million undocumented immigrants living on U.S. soil, our economy would decline by \$2.6 trillion over a decade, not including the massive cost of such an endeavor.

Each year undocumented immigrants contribute as much as \$1.5 billion to the Medicare system and \$7 billion to the Social Security system, even though unjustly they will never be able to collect benefits upon retirement.

### SEXUAL ABUSE AT WORK

Due to the many obstacles that confront farm worker women, including fear, shame, lack of information about their rights, lack of available resources to help them, poverty, cultural and/or social pressures, language access and, for some, their status as undocumented immigrants, few farmworker women ever come forward to seek justice for the sexual harassment and assault they have suffered. In interviews, virtually all women reported that sexual violence in the workplace is a serious problem. While investigating the sexual harassment of farmworker women, the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission found that “hundreds, if not thousands of women had to have sex with supervisors to get jobs or keep them and /or put up with a constant barrage of grabbing, touching and propositions for sex by supervisors.

***TO BE GRATEFUL IS TO RECOGNIZE THE LOVE  
OF GOD IN EVERYTHING HE HAS GIVEN US...  
AND HE HAS GIVEN US EVERYTHING.***

**Thomas Merton**