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Catholic Charities USA releases 2008 Survey Results

Tom Gallagher | Sep. 15, 2009 NCR Today

You got to hand it to Catholic Charities USA. The timing of the release of its 2008 survey [1] is impeccable, as the U.S. is focused on healthcare reform, jobs and the economy (among other issues, say, e.g., the wars). This survey is a clear reminder that private, market forces are not working for the poor. The "anti-federal government" crowd should spend some quality time reading this survey, and then perhaps, flipping to Matthew 25: 31-46.

"CCUSA and its member agencies, one of the nation's largest social services and advocacy organizations, today released its 2008 Annual Survey -- an extensive compilation of front-line data that comes on the heels of last week's U.S. Census Bureau numbers and painfully though not surprisingly further documents increasing levels of poverty.

The number of clients served by Catholic Charities in 2008 jumped by 10.2%, moving from approximately 8 million to 8.5 million, substantially reversing the reduction in poverty trends and levels that the Annual Survey positively revealed in the middle of the decade. Most troubling and telltale, Catholic Charities' agencies reported providing employment services to 67,597 persons in 2008, an increase of about 35% from the 50,080 reported in 2007, reflecting the impact of the declining economy on unemployment.

Catholic Charities USA, which stands with the poor and as the voice of the poor, has pledged itself to reducing poverty by 50 percent by 2020. Current trends challenge this goal and are deplorable. As signs of some economic recovery begin to surface, CCUSA is committed to making sure that those most vulnerable and marginalized members of society are not left behind this time."

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[1] http://news.prnewswire.com/DisplayReleaseContent.aspx?ACCT=104&STORY=/www/story/09-15-2009/0005094520&EDATE=