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Catholic Charities USA Calls New Poverty Rate Unacceptable

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American?s new poverty rate is ?unacceptable,? Father Larry Snyder, president of Catholic Charities USA, said August 27.

?It is unacceptable that in a nation that is as prosperous as ours that 37.3 million people, including 13.3 million children, continue to live in poverty. At 12.5 percent, the poverty rate indicates that reducing poverty is not a priority for this nation,? he said in a press released issued by the nonprofit organization.

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For Catholic Charities USA, and our 1,700 local member agencies who serve nearly 8 million in need a year, the poverty rate is not just another economic statistic. This unacceptable figure represents the millions of families we see each and every day who are struggling just to make ends meet.

"Substantial decreases in these numbers must occur in order to alleviate the struggles that millions are experiencing.

"The downturn in the economy is making matters worse,? he said. ?Across our nation, Catholic Charities agencies are seeing more and more people having to choose between putting food on the table, paying their utility bills, or making their rent or mortgage payments.

?Needing help with food, rent, clothing, and prescriptions are all symptoms of much larger problems facing the poor and vulnerable in America, such as low wages and the lack of affordable housing and health care. These are problems that must be addressed if we are ever going to cut poverty in our country and create better economic opportunities for all.

?Reducing poverty in the United States must be a national priority. That?s why Catholic Charities USA launched its Campaign to Reduce Poverty and America aims cut the poverty rate in half by 2020. By helping to lift individuals and families out of poverty, we can ensure that they are in a better position to weather these economic downturns.

?Let these troubling poverty statistics be a call to action for each of us. As a nation, we must demand that our current and future leaders give a much higher priority to the needs of the poor in their policymaking decisions.

?In this election year, candidates for public office?especially our presidential candidates?must move from rhetoric to action and propose comprehensive plans to address the needs of more than 37 million people living in poverty in the United States over the next decade. We call on all Americans to ask their candidates, ?If elected, what will you do to address poverty??

?We must no longer ignore the injustice of poverty and the extreme inequality in America.?

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