

Resolution C

To Establish a Plan of Action for Relief for the Homeless and Poor in Our Society

Whereas the current increase in suffering of homeless people in our society has been largely ignored during our economic downturn and housing crisis, as almost 700,000 of our citizens are known to be homeless (with four in ten living on the street);

Whereas the greatest increases in recent years in homelessness are among people who have become unemployed (including veterans returning from our wars) and among those who formerly lived in homes now in foreclosure;

Whereas 250,000 persons living in families are homeless;

Whereas, contrary to misconceptions, blame and stereotypes, the root causes of homelessness are lack of affordable housing and poverty;

Whereas in response to our economic downturn and jobs crisis, budgetary reductions at the state, federal, and local levels have had direct and devastating effects upon our parishes' work with the poor – upon shelters for the homeless; upon soup kitchens, upon food banks, upon employment counseling programs, upon legal services programs;

Whereas a large part of Jesus' ministry consisted of the prophetic task of confronting and denouncing not merely the distinct sinful actions of individuals, but a host of systemic, structural evils (e.g., the transformation of the temple into "a den of thieves") that degrade human life and impede the coming of God's reign;

Be it Resolved, therefore, That parishes throughout The Episcopal Church will form prayer-and study-groups to meet regularly for an extended period in order to discern what is the Church's call with regard to the homeless and the poor in this present era; to discover how our faith in the coming reign of God may be sustained and strengthened in these profoundly difficult days; to devise methods for challenging and changing systems that now severely limit our society's potential; to plan actions for relief for the most vulnerable among us; to raise the quality and dignity of life for the poor and the homeless; and to restore compassion to our public and private discourse.