

INTRODUCTION TO THE DOMESTIC POVERTY TOOLKIT
Developed by The Domestic Poverty Task Force
Association for Episcopal Deacons
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During the ordination service every deacon is charged by the Church "you are to make Christ and his redemptive love known by your word and example, to those among whom you live and work and worship." A further charge is added—"you are to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world...and to show Christ's people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself." (BCP. p. 543). Thus, no deacon enters the ordained ministry of the Church without being given a specific call to action. This charge is sealed and sanctified through consecration.

In Matthew's Gospel (25:36-37) we find a Scriptural basis for diaconal action. Throughout the Church deacons are dedicated to ministries to the hungry, the homeless, the unemployed, the unskilled, the sick, those in prison and many others who live at or near the poverty line. Thus, the words of Matthew 25 provide a broad umbrella under which the call to *diakonia* can be exercised. Additionally, each of us is called by Christ to see "the poor" not as a separate and disadvantaged class, but as people who are our neighbors. We are called to put on new eyes for seeing and new ears for listening. This often inspires a change of focus and a change of heart, affecting both the way we see the world and the way we act in it. It is this calling that prompts us to keep asking the question "When Did We See You...?"

Three types of resources must shape the vision of one who undertakes diaconal ministry:

- resources to measure poverty and describe its effects in a community
- resources to help congregations develop both an awareness of poverty and a desire to alleviate it through local action.
- resources to help tell the story of God's people whether from the pulpit or around the dinner table.

Each of the three folders on this CD contains a few resources recommended by The Domestic Poverty Task Force for making the face of poverty visible. But, what you find here is just a beginning of the domestic poverty work envisioned by the Association for Episcopal Deacons.

The rest of the history of this project, "When Did We See You...?," is the history that you and other deacons will write.