

A NEW MOMENT

ENVISIONING THE MINISTRY OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES

2017-2022



Original Good Samaritan icon commissioned by CCUSA and painted by Janet Jamie.



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PREFACE

As we continue our participation in the unfolding story of the ministry of Catholic Charities in the United States during this Year of Mercy, we take to heart anew the commitment to love our neighbors who struggle as they live under the weight of poverty in this rich nation. Catholic Charities' commitment was first articulated in the Charter of 1910, expanded upon in the Cadre Report, and deepened in Vision 2000. Now we share a new "chapter" in this important work of our church as we continue to respond to the needs of people who are vulnerable.

In the midst of these fractious times that mark the latter part of this decade, we have been profoundly moved by the words of Pope Benedict XVI who implores us to be organizers of love and by Pope Francis who challenges us to be salt, leaven and light providing a beacon of hope to those in need. We take to heart this mandate to love and to serve as we commit ourselves in this moment to minister tirelessly on behalf of those who are most vulnerable.

To that end, the ministry of Catholic Charities across the United States has been engaged in a process of identifying our national strategic priorities for the next five years and articulating our vision for the future. This year-long process has been grounded in study, prayer and theological reflection as it incorporates the journeys in faith of diocesan directors of Catholic Charities agencies, national office colleagues, members of our Boards of Directors and many others engaged in the ministry of charity, mercy and compassion who accompany us in this sacred work.

Central to this process has been reflection and faith sharing on the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:30). This powerful story of compassion beyond bound and openness to human suffering regardless of culture, touched us and impelled us to scrutinize how we are charged in this moment to care for our sisters and brothers who "lay half dead along the roadside" of social disdain.

In the pages that follow, we share with you some thoughts on this gospel passage as it relates to our ministry today. We invite you to join us in continued prayer and reflection as we continue to ponder this scripture story and probe how it invites us to respond to those who are suffering in our midst.

Our vision for Catholic Charities takes shape and form from the impetus of this scripture passage and from the encyclicals and messages of our two most recent Holy Fathers. Of course, no vision is complete unless it carries with it a sense of how we will strive to en flesh it. Consequently, with the able assistance of Nygren Consulting, diocesan directors and national office staff engaged in a process of identifying the most critical needs of poor and vulnerable persons at this moment in time and began to explore the actions we will take to address these needs. The seven national strategic priorities identified assist us in focusing our ministry and communicating our collective story as the tangible face of mercy in the Catholic Church in this country. Specific goals, objectives, and timelines pertinent to local needs of each agencies are being developed.

While the vision is compelling and the strategic priorities daunting, we believe that along with 70,000 committed employees and more than 200,000 dedicated volunteers and benefactors, we will be agents of mercy and compassion, easing the suffering of our sisters and brothers in need in these unsettled times.

We are deeply grateful for the support of our bishops throughout the country who stand with us and work alongside us in this sacred undertaking of Caritas in our domestic church and thankful to each person who extends themselves in kindness and generosity to those most in need.

Sister Donna Markham OP, PhD
President & CEO
Catholic Charities USA



As Catholic Charities,
we labor in the streets
inviting and serving those who have been left out
to know and experience the tremendous and abundant love of God
through Jesus Christ.

We commit ourselves
to break down walls of division
that keep sisters and brothers
separated from one another,
excluded, or rendered disposable by our society.

With joy,
we resolve to build bridges of
hope, mercy and justice
toward the creation of a culture of communal care
responsive to the cries
of those who are poor.

A NEW MOMENT

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OUR CURRENT MOMENT

The Spirit once again is stirring in our hearts and in the world. We are moved by Pope Francis' visit to the United States in September 2015 and his continual invitation to us to promote a "culture of care"ⁱ and compassion throughout our world. Especially attentive to the cries of the poor as they emerge from the cry of the earth, his encyclical *Laudato Si'* echoes themes of his message to our Annual Gathering in Charlotte, NC on October 8, 2014: We are all connected to one another and we encounter the face of God through the people whose lives we touch.

Indeed, this is a new moment as the Spirit stirs our hearts to enter ever more deeply into the venues of suffering in our interconnected world.ⁱⁱ

Pope Francis' visit to the United States and the United Nations heralded a new moment of the Spirit at work among and through us all. Calling for renewed vigor in reading of the signs of the times through his vision of the Church as a field hospital, Pope Francis' witness of encounter and accompaniment with the marginalized and vulnerable was palpable as he visited Catholic Charities agencies in Washington DC and East Harlem, NY. His clarion call connecting "the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor"ⁱⁱⁱ and his impassioned message to Catholic Charities gathered in Charlotte galvanized us to continue to work tirelessly on behalf of those "excluded" and "disposable." His challenge to "be in the streets" with those who are suffering and to enter into an encounter that opens the way for others "to know and experience the tremendous and abundant love of God through Jesus Christ" reverberates deeply within us. He called us to break down walls of division and open our hearts to embrace all who have been relegated to the margins of society.

Our vision awakens in us the parable of the Good Samaritan as it is lived out in our world today. In this passage, Jesus is instructing the lawyer as to who is neighbor to the victim:

*Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half dead... But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction 'Take care of him'... 'I shall repay you on my way back'..." [Jesus then asked the lawyer] "Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?" He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."
(Lk 10:30, 33-34, 35-37)*

As Catholic Charities today we are called to be both Good Samaritans and good Innkeepers, attending to those who have been beaten down, the legions lying on the sides of roads of discrimination, neglect and disdain in our society. We must be ever new and compassionate Samaritans as well as fair and attentive Innkeepers.

The dual obligation of being both Samaritan and Innkeeper comprise our response in mercy and justice on behalf of those who have been consigned to life on the margins. The Samaritan fully enters into the world of our suffering neighbors with a heartfelt vision, strategic awareness and a well-conceived action plan. The Innkeeper remains proactively vigilant in supporting the return to a sustainable life.

In the opening scene in the text, we learn that the victim was left half dead by the robbers who assaulted him. Every day at Catholic Charities we encounter people left half-dead because of conditions of society. They are children and families who are hungry; they are homeless and mentally ill persons; they are frightened refugees and immigrants; they are trafficked human beings; they are the frail and forgotten. Our neighbors lie figuratively and literally on the roadsides as vulnerable persons surviving on the margins of our communities. We meet them at every turn in the road. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho cuts through each one of our cities, towns and communities.

The parable next reveals the compassion of encounter. Others passed by, but the Samaritan traveler stopped to help. This traveler was moved by compassion and filled with mercy. The Samaritan regarded this human being as his neighbor. He saw him, he encountered

him and he tended to him. He accorded him respect and dignity. Each day we witness scores of Catholic Charities staff and volunteers who are filled with that same compassion and mercy. We are challenged to stop in our tracks, to reach out to care for our neighbor cast aside and left for dead. We refuse to ignore or turn a blind eye. We stop and encounter the suffering other.

We also stop to encounter and minister to entire communities of persons struggling for life and victimized by marginalization. We walk off the road and tend to persons and communities living in tent cities, in refrigerator boxes. We welcome them back from jails.

We encounter them and hear their stories of surviving in blighted inner cities, struggling suburbs and wounded rural communities. These people and communities cry out to us for care and for advocacy on their behalf. Our encounter with those in poverty is both personal and communal, as we are called to be in relationship with our struggling neighbors. In these encounters we see the face of Jesus. These encounters with Christ then call us to faith-filled action of service and advocacy.

Another moment of action reveals the Good Samaritan pouring out oil and wine to heal the wounds and providing bandages to stabilize this suffering neighbor. We learn from this story that the Good Samaritan had resources available to care for the one who had been left half-dead. So, too, we in Catholic Charities have many resources at our disposal. As the Good Samaritan used the skills and tools at his disposal, we use the tools at our disposal to serve millions of persons each year. Our wine, oil and bandages today include our feeding programs, our shelter programs, our counseling services, our direct assistance programs that provide that immediate support and care.

Then the Good Samaritan transported the victim to the inn and asked the Innkeeper to sustain, protect and heal their mutual neighbor. Likewise, today we garner the means to take care of persons and communities for the long haul, ensuring a safe and stable place of healing and return to wholeness for those who might otherwise be forever abandoned to the roadside. Using these resources we reduce poverty through refugee resettlement and immigration legal services, affordable housing, employment services and asset development. Additionally, we prevent the cycle of generational poverty through child and family development and educational services.

Next, the Good Samaritan took an even more radical step: He shared with the Innkeeper two silver coins – a gift given out of generosity and out of a sharing of abundance. The Good Samaritan knew that the Innkeeper required resources for the long-term care of this neighbor. The Samaritan shared abundantly from his own coffers so that the Innkeeper could plan accordingly to bring this neighbor to wholeness. This act of generosity and planning continues the journey of accompaniment, no longer by the Good Samaritan alone, but now with a community of support designed to help this neighbor thrive.

We serve as the Innkeeper as we manage and lead our “inns” and institutions. We must think strategically for the long-term support and recovery of persons, families and communities as they grow in strength and resiliency. We desire that our neighbors survive and thrive. We are agents who organize love as a corporate ministry of the Church. We provide those structures that care for and sustain individuals. We advocate for just structures that humanize and transform our communities.

Jesus then instructs the lawyer, who correctly answered the question about the one who showed mercy and who was the neighbor, that he should “go and do likewise.” That mandate compels us to act today. We ministers of charity and mercy stand emboldened to go and do likewise, and to invite others to do the same. Both compassionate and strategic in our works of mercy and justice, we stop to encounter and to minister to those along our roadsides by providing direct service and working relentlessly to humanize and transform harsh social structures.

The parable of the Good Samaritan and the Innkeeper helps us recognize three themes that infuse our everyday encounters with those persons and communities that we serve and work with together: compassion, inclusion and accompaniment. As Catholic Charities we know the heartfelt compassion that stops us in our busy tracks to care for those left behind who cry out to us from their pain and need. We refuse to be satisfied with emergency measures alone but also commit to accompany persons, families and communities – “dignified agents of their own destinies”^{iv} – in their long-term journeys toward hope and continued healing. We continue the work of humanizing our society by caring for the “least of these” as we commit to transforming the very structures that divide and marginalize our neighbors. Like the Good Samaritan and the Innkeeper, we are called to glimpse the reign of God in our midst through our actions of mercy and justice.

Through our ministry of charity, we seek to motivate others to want to struggle for this shared vision of mercy and justice to become manifest in our communities today. We aspire to model the way for others, by stepping off the path to compassionately encounter those who are poor and vulnerable. We challenge the process of existing systems by advocating for more just and compassionate policies and creative practices to address poverty and isolation. With hearts filled with Christ's love and the power of the Spirit, we engage the hearts of our staff, volunteers, donors, policy makers, partners, and especially the people we serve. And knowing that we cannot do this by ourselves, we engage others to act together as we humanize and transform our society.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND INITIATIVES

Linking both the Good Samaritan and the Innkeeper, we as Catholic Charities focus on continuing and strengthening our current ministries and commit ourselves to intensify those areas that will support long-term solutions to poverty and the wellbeing of the least of these among us.

FOR REFLECTION...

1. Where do you experience the Spirit “stirring” in your ministry these days?
2. How are you both Good Samaritan and Innkeeper in the work you are about?
3. Who are the people you see “lying by the side of the road,” struggling and vulnerable?
4. How do you extend mercy and compassion to these people?

CATHOLIC CHARITIES STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



OUR COMMITMENT

To alleviate, reduce and prevent poverty.

OUR MISSION

The mission of Catholic Charities is to provide service to people in need, to advocate for justice in social structures and to call the entire church and other people of good will to do the same.

OUR VISION

As Catholic Charities, we labor in the streets inviting and serving those who have been left out to know and experience the tremendous and abundant love of God through Jesus Christ. We commit ourselves to break down walls of division that keep sisters and brothers separated from one another, excluded, or rendered disposable by our society. With joy, we resolve to build bridges of hope, mercy and justice toward the creation of a culture of communal care responsive to the cries of those who are poor.

OUR PRIORITIES 2017-2022

INNOVATE



AFFORDABLE HOUSING



INTEGRATED HEALTH & NUTRITION



IMMIGRATION & REFUGEE SERVICES



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT & CATHOLIC IDENTITY

ELEVATE



DISASTER SERVICES



SOCIAL ENTERPRISE INITIATIVES



ADVOCACY & SOCIAL POLICY INITIATIVES

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

A MINISTRY OF LOVE AND MERCY

HISTORICAL MOMENTS

Since its inception Catholic Charities as a national movement has responded to various moments of the Spirit revealed in the life of the Church and society. The following is a summary of these stirrings of the Holy Spirit throughout our history.

THE NATIONAL CHARTER: 1910

A critical moment of the Spirit emerged in 1891 as Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* caught the imagination of the Church by introducing major elements of Catholic social doctrine through a new "reading of the signs of the times." Catholic Charities in the United States responded with its own reading of the signs of the times as it convened independent diocesan "bureaus" and created its national Charter in 1910. The Charter sought to professionalize the movement and challenged it to become "an attorney for the poor." Catholic Charities agencies grew and expanded markedly over the years to come.

Catholic Charities "bureaus" around the country institutionalized their ministries to provide assistance to persons and families emigrating from Europe and fleeing poverty. This created a popular myth that Catholicism and poverty were connected. Fighting bigotry, Catholic charitable institutions organized to take charge of the challenge of poverty as a problem of "[their] own."^v These institutions successfully advocated for laws expressing a preference for human service providers of the same religion as the children and families requiring services. As a result, public benefit agencies began funding the work of many Catholic child welfare institutions and social service efforts.

The 1910 founding of the National Conference of Catholic Charities (NCCC) provided a national voice for the diocesan bureaus to represent the poor. Inspired by the 1919 U.S. Catholic Bishops' "Program for Social Reconstruction," the NCCC became a lead advocate for the development of federal action on the social safety net, the expansion of child welfare services, housing legislation and immigration reform.

The Great Depression required the creation of a new framework for social welfare policy. The NCCC worked to create a space and role for Catholic Charities bureaus to be a critical partner in the provision of assistance to needy children and families. As a result of the advocacy of NCCC, the National Housing Act (1934) was passed, providing more affordable housing and home mortgages for working-class and poor families; additionally, the passing of the Social Security Act (1935)—a high priority of the NCCC—created a more stable national social safety net.

THE CADRE REPORT (1972)

A new moment of the Spirit again stirred us with the advent of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and its call for us to be immersed in the modern world, responding to its “joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties”^{vi}. The Catholic Charities movement captured this energy and initiated the Cadre Report, *“Toward a Renewed Catholic Charities”* (1972). Our mission to “serve, transform and humanize social structures, and convene the Church and others to do the same” serves us to this day as the impetus for all that we undertake. The Cadre Report provided inspiration for our work locally and as a national movement through its articulation of a theology of Catholic Charities.

The War on Poverty in the 1960s and 1970s led to the further growth of the Catholic Charities movement. The federal government's preferences for funding local community-based organizations bred many faith-based partnerships. The Cadre Report, steeped in a new understanding of the need to engage in direct services as well as in community organizing and community development, refocused our efforts in collaboration with our parishes and local neighborhood and civic groups. Numerous Catholic institutions, as well, continued to provide services to needy children.

A shift began, however: Catholic Charities would be measured by the “empowerment and liberation engendered” rather than by how many Catholics were staff members or clients. The roles of social action, legislative advocacy and convening therefore would take on more prominence in the work of diocesan agencies. Many of our Catholic Charities agencies worked in close alignment with the U.S. Catholic Bishops’ Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) to fund groups of low income persons engaged in social change efforts.

In the 1980s, cutbacks in federal funding for social service programs led to increased demand for Catholic Charities services even as the spending cuts limited the scope of non-profit response. Another change occurred in the social work profession itself: Community organizing methods increasingly became less prominent as a mode of social work while clinical and therapeutic models of service delivery dominated the field of practice and reimbursement.

NCCC, and later Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA, 1986), began to see itself as a more inclusive movement and expanded its membership to embrace not only its diocesan directors, but also Catholic Charities staff, volunteers and parishioners throughout the country. The Catholic Charities movement engaged its members in various regional and national gatherings to analyze, discuss and debate policy papers through its “Congress” sessions. CCUSA published these position papers combining theology, practice and policy on topics such as criminal justice (1984), housing (1985), the feminization of poverty (1986) and pluralism and private/public partnerships (1987).

VISION 2000 (1996)

Another moment of the Spirit stirred with St. Pope John Paul II’s visit to our Annual Gathering in 1987 in San Antonio, TX. Shortly thereafter, the publication of *Centesimus Annus* reaffirmed the elements of Catholic social teaching on charity and justice laid out in *Rerum Novarum* by Pope Leo XIII. Catholic Charities captured this movement of the Spirit by engaging the entire membership (1993-1996) in the creation of VISION 2000. We recommitted ourselves to the threefold mission of service, advocacy and convening. VISION 2000 also directed our national and local energies toward our relationships with those we serve, our relationships with our communities, the Church and to each other.

Catholic Charities continued to convene its participants and others to improve social services and to be advocates for social change. Catholic Charities “Congresses” continued to publish position papers including Access to Health Care (1988), A Just Food System (1989), The Family (1991) and Transforming the Welfare System (1993). Changes in U.S. federal policy from Aid to Dependent Children (ADC, 1935) to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF, 1994) continued to challenge Catholic Charities agencies in their ability to provide clients with solutions to their basic needs. All levels of government continued to engage Catholic Charities and other faith-based agencies in a myriad of public-private partnerships that ensured the provision of quality services in communities across the country.

THE CENTENNIAL: 100 YEARS OF THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHARITIES MOVEMENT (2010)

Yet another stirring of the Spirit created a new moment as Pope Benedict XVI challenged us through his deeply spiritual reflection on the practice of love. In his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (2006) he inspired us to “form our hearts” as “organizers of love”^{vii} and identified the threefold duty of our faith: to proclaim the Word of God, celebrate the sacraments, and exercise the ministry of charity. The Catholic Charities movement connected this moment of the Spirit with our renewed *Code of Ethics*, our recommitment to Catholic identity and formation, and our collaborative network engagement.

Catholic Charities moved away, during this time period, from hosting various “Congresses” and began focusing on the internal development of position papers that would be shared and endorsed by its members. One major paper entitled *Justice for Newcomers: A Catholic Call for Solidarity and Reform*, focused on immigration reform.^{viii} A major paper on poverty, *Poverty in America: A Threat to the Common Good*,^{ix} directed our local and national services as well as our advocacy and convening efforts toward the goal of reducing poverty in half by 2020. The Catholic Charities campaign to reduce poverty focused local and national efforts to find new ways to help persons, families and communities break out of poverty as we held ourselves ever more deliberately to the practice of love.

Poverty solution discussions ensued and the Catholic Charities movement again identified the continued role of racism in both immigration reform and poverty reduction efforts. In that light, Catholic Charities produced a companion paper, *Poverty and Racism: Overlapping Threats to the Common Good*.^x In 2009, the Catholic Charities movement reflected on and published a paper on housing, *The Home is Our Foundation*.

Catholic Charities USA and the movement celebrated the 100th anniversary of its founding in 2010. Poverty summits were held throughout our country in preparation for our annual gathering gala to be held in Washington, DC. Catholic Charities USA worked with congressional representatives to develop and introduce specific legislation on poverty reduction. This legislation was called *The National Opportunity and Community Renewal Act* (NOCRA). Due to increased political polarization, the legislation stalled in Congress. In light of this reality, in 2013, Catholic Charities USA engaged and encouraged specific Catholic Charities agencies to launch or expand programs and initiatives that exemplified at least two of the principles outlined in the NOCRA bill. All programs needed to include a research and evaluation component to ensure they were results-based. Additionally, programs needed to demonstrate either a “system-changing” or “market-driven” approach to poverty reduction.

Catholic Charities USA and its member agencies worked to incorporate the principles of “system-changing” and “market-driven” in various ways. “System-changing” efforts for Catholic Charities focused on embodying a holistic approach to help individuals and families break out of poverty. CCUSA’s advocacy agenda fought to break down government funding silos in order for holistic services to be delivered efficiently and effectively. “Market-driven” approaches for Catholic Charities meant experimenting with and advocating for new models of social service delivery. These new models included the development of social enterprises that generate employment opportunities and revenue streams for the agency, create new capital markets for nonprofits, expand tax credits that promote job retention, education and financial literacy, and monetize the savings of successful programs.

NOW, A NEW MOMENT (2015)

Another moment of the Spirit’s stirring occurred as the Board of Trustees of Catholic Charities USA appointed Sister Donna Markham OP, PhD as its new President and CEO. During Sister Donna’s first few months with us, she called us to work together to create a new vision, articulate strategic priorities, and re-engage the Catholic Charities network to continue to see the “face of Jesus” in each person we serve and to respond to those who knock on our doors for immediate alleviation of suffering.

In this light, Sister Donna called us to capture this new moment of the Spirit articulated by Pope Francis by inviting the Catholic Charities movement and ministry to reflect, pray, and dialogue together to discern what the Spirit calls us to do today as we move into our shared future.^{xi}

ENDNOTES

ⁱLaudato Si', no. 231

ⁱⁱLS, no. 16

ⁱⁱⁱLS, no. 49

^{iv}Pope Francis, address to the general assembly of the United Nations, NY, 9.25.2015

^vBrown, Dorothy M. and Elizabeth McKeown. *The Poor Belong to Us: Catholic Charities and American Welfare*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998

^{vi}Gaudium et Spes, no. 1.

^{vii}Deus Caritas Est, no. 20

^{viii}2005

^{ix}2006

^x2008

^{xi}Resources used: CCUSA (2010) Section 2: Understanding our Identity. Resource 8: The History of US Catholic charitable activities. *Catholic in Charity & in Identity: Resources to enhance the legacy*. Catholic Charities USA. Alexandria, VA.; CCUSA (2010). *Catholic Charities USA: A century of service, advocacy and convening*. Catholic Charities USA. Alexandria, VA.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES SOCIAL MINISTRY, 1910-PRESENT

SEEING, JUDGING AND ACTING

Catholic Charities has long applied the methodology of “seeing, judging and acting” to understand better the social realities of the day and to respond to those realities and needs as they affect the lives of people who are poor. In the accompanying chart we share with you a summary of how Catholic Charities has observed the signs of the times throughout the past 106 years, reflected upon the Church’s social teaching and her analysis of global and national realities of the moment and has undertaken concrete actions in response. Throughout our history we have strived to be attentive to the urgent crises of the day, studied Catholic Social Doctrine and then developed practical, concrete ways of responding to and caring for individuals and families in need.

The chart is intended to represent highlights from various periods in the history of Catholic Charities. It is representational and not exhaustive in its scope. We invite the reader to add your agency’s particular actions over the decades as you consider the many ways you have responded and continue to respond to those who are most vulnerable.



Working to Reduce Poverty in America

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