

#Prayers for a just and compassionate federal budget #
July 2011

Leader: In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful: We are gathered as people of faith on Capitol Hill to pray for a just and compassionate federal budget.

Leader: As Congress and the Administration consider different approaches to reducing the deficit, we are here to make visible the potential impact of the budget negotiations on our country's most vulnerable populations and on Earth itself. We believe that the federal budget is a moral document. To eliminate vital domestic and international programs that respond to the needs of poor people and our planet is wrong.

Leader: The Holy Qur'an reads: "Let there become of you a community that shall call for righteousness, enjoin justice and forbid evil (3:104)." And so we have gathered to strive to be that community and to seek righteousness and justice within our nation's budget.

All: God, we pray for a just and compassionate budget.

Leader: Twenty percent of all children in the United States live in poverty. We cannot leave our children a legacy of rising debt, nor can we leave them a legacy of rising poverty.

All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects all our children from hunger and homelessness, from inadequate education and healthcare, and from poverty.

Leader: Many older adults in the United States live near or below the poverty line. Social Security and Medicare are their lifelines. We cannot neglect the very real needs of our senior citizens.

All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects our elders from poverty, financial insecurity and inadequate healthcare.

Leader: Women in the United States are disproportionately served by the social safety net. Women rely on many of the programs facing drastic cuts – from Medicare and Medicaid to SNAP and TANF, from SSI and Pell grants to domestic violence prevention to nutrition and child care. We cannot ignore the real needs of women in our society or fail to address the systemic injustice that perpetuates their vulnerability.

All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects women from poverty, financial insecurity, inadequate healthcare and physical danger.

Leader: With an official unemployment rate over nine percent, millions of Americans are struggling to meet their most basic needs. Yet an unjust federal budget could reduce or eliminate assistance for the unemployed and their families.

All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that responds to the needs of those who are unemployed, protecting them and their dependents as much as possible from the overwhelming anxiety of financial insecurity and lost self-esteem.

Leader: We live in a world that is intensely interconnected. Loving our neighbors requires that we promote the global common good. Yet, programs that respond to HIV and AIDS, extreme poverty, food insecurity, overwhelming debt, violence against women, natural disasters and other urgent needs are likely to be severely cut.

All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters around the world.

Leader: God's good creation continues to suffer from our use and abuse of its precious gifts. The enforcement of laws that protect the integrity of creation could be severely compromised by unjust budgetary decisions.

All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that respects and protects the integrity of creation.

Leader: The Holy Qur'an reads: "Whatever of your wealth you spend shall [first] be for your parents, and for the near of kin, and the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer; and whatever good you do, verily, God has full knowledge thereof. (2:215)"

All: God, we pray for a just and compassionate budget.

Leader: The Holy Qur'an reads: "O you who have attained to faith! Be ever steadfast in your devotion to God, bearing witness to the truth in all equity; and never let hatred of anyone lead you into the sin of deviating from justice. Be just: this is closest to being God-conscious. And remain conscious of God: verily, God is aware of all that you do." (5:8)

All: God, it is You we worship, and it is You we ask for help. Guide us to the straight path, and guide our nation toward a budget that is just and compassionate, according to your sacred command. Amen.

(Created by Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns; adapted by the Islamic Society of North America.)