

A major problem facing America today is the grossly inadequate schooling for children in many poor neighborhoods coupled with a serious lack of employment opportunities for low-skill workers. The result has been severely troubling inequalities in income and wealth and very high levels of incarceration. America also lacks adequate public transportation, affordable housing for much of its workforce, care for the mentally ill, the homeless, the disabled and frail, and victims of addiction.

Internationally, at least 51.2 million people are now living under forced displacement due primarily to armed conflict, billions are in some level of poverty, and the threat of another world war seems to sporadically grow and recede without any force to withstand it.

All of these social problems have a common origin which might be called unchecked greed. Catholic social teaching has another name for it, which is a lack of concern for the common good, a failure to uphold human dignity as the ultimate goal of human institutions, particularly the family and the state. Human beings, families and communities need freedom to be masters of their own fate to the extent that they do not pose a threat to others or themselves. They need opportunities to acquire skills and knowledge and to use them for their own good and the good of others. We all need to contribute as fully as we can to the well-being of the larger society of which we are a part.

Let us put our heads together and suggest ways that one or another of the major problems mentioned above can be dealt with more effectively. Send your ideas by email to

<mailto:socialjustice@catholicsofpleasanton.org?subject=Attacking the Big Problems>. Then see what comments others make about this subject at a newly created newsletter website click [here](#).