



Catholic Social Teaching

A Family's Future and A Family Goat

Mrs. Sanders told this story to her junior high class:

"Thirty years ago, during Advent, my religion teacher told us that she had just received a letter from the leader of an organization that worked with the poor around the world. They were appealing to people to help families in India by buying a goat for a family. With a goat, a family would have enough milk and cheese to live on and to sell. A goat could help a family living in extreme poverty pull itself out of poverty.

"My teacher asked us if we wanted to buy a goat for Christmas, for a family in India. Of course we all said yes. It would cost us \$50. We collected the money, and our teacher sent in the money. Guess what happened next?" Mrs. Sanders asked the class. "We forgot all about the goat."

"Several months later," she continued, "our class received a letter. The postmark was from a place somewhere in India. I remember because we looked it up on a map before we opened the envelope. Sure enough, it was a letter from the family for whom we had bought the goat. Not only a letter, but also a black and white photograph of the mother, father, and their children with their goat.

"In the letter, the family told us all about themselves, and thanked us for the gift of the goat. They said that it had changed their lives. One of their children was soon going to be able to start school. They didn't spend their dayshungry anymore. They were able to sell the milk, too.

"Our teacher passed around the letter and the photograph. She told us to take as much time as we wanted reading it and looking at the picture of the family. She didn't have to tell us that there was a special connection now between us and them. We felt it.

"I know our class back then made a difference in the life of that family. And I think that it's something for this class to think about. What can we do that will make a difference in the life of a family at the other end of the world?"

Preferential Option for the Poor

Christians put the needs of the poor first. We need to work to eliminate the sinful inequalities that exist among people. We also need to work for the improvement of the living conditions of people to protect and care for them.

