



# Responding to the Foreign Aid Freeze

Starting at 3pm ET



Maryknoll Office  
for Global Concerns

# Opening Prayer *A City on a Mountain*

Lord of all good things,  
You have made us a blessed nation,  
A city set on a mountain,  
And have willed us to do for the least of  
yours  
What we would do for you.

Make us a generous people:  
Sharers with the hungry,  
Comforters of the sick,  
Protectors of the most vulnerable,  
Friends of the alien,  
People of shelter in the time of storm,  
Advocates for the oppressed,  
Speaking out whenever and wherever your  
people are threatened.

Teach us to share graciously,  
as you shared all for us,  
To tithe righteously,  
setting aside a just portion for our poorest  
brothers and sisters,  
To give joyfully,  
knowing that we are pleasing the God who  
desires mercy over sacrifice,  
As individuals, as families,  
As a nation.

Then will all know of your justice, of your  
glory.

For a city set on a mountain cannot be  
hidden.

AMEN.

*We pray also for your servant Pope Francis. Loving God, grant him the courage, strength,  
and healing he needs.*

# What do we see around the world?

- 700 million people live in extreme **POVERTY**.
- 1 in 11 people (733 million) face **HUNGER**, up from 650 million in 2019.
- 1 in 7 people exposed to political violent **CONFLICT** (July '23-July '24), a 15% increase.
- 20 million people a year forced to flee **CLIMATE DISASTERS** which have **tripled** in the last 30 years.
- **FOREIGN AID FREEZE** announced on Jan. 24 while programs go through a 90-day review.



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# Impacts of the Foreign Aid Freeze

From the point of view of the United States, the freeze...

- Fails to make the United States “safer, stronger, and more prosperous”
- Is inefficient, counterproductive and destructive
- Does long-term damage on NGOs that are USAID’s implementing partners

From the point of view of the Maryknoll entities:

- Maryknoll entities do not receive grants or contracts from USAID or any other U.S. agency.
- But we work with NGOs that do and in communities that rely on their services and programs.



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# Thailand

"4,000 refugees and asylum seekers served by the Urban Refugee Project run by Jesuit Refugee Service are affected.

Other NGOs, especially those delivering healthcare, have had to scale down or totally shut their operations, impacting 100,000 refugees and asylum seekers in nine camps.

We need funding to provide shelter, medical care and services for displaced people within Myanmar and in Thailand.

In the two northern-most camps where we provide educational services to 3,600 children, there are 55 children dependent on medicine that we can no longer provide."

Fr Joe Hampson SJ,  
Jesuit Refugee Service Asia Pacific Region



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# Guatemala

“The two health clinics that are run by the local hospital had to let go over a third of their staff.

Medical staff who run the testing labs and follow-up with people living with HIV who abandoned treatment, were let go.

The clinic employees who deliver medicine to people in outlying villages who don't have the money to pay for transportation to the hospital or pharmacy, were let go.

The specialized nurse who comes to draw blood from patients was let go. Now patients will need to travel 2 hours to a lab.”

Sr. Dee Smith, MM  
Santa Maria Hospice and Project Life  
Serving People with HIV and AIDS in Guatemala



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# South Sudan

“South Sudan is food insecure due to climate change, displacement, agricultural knowledge gaps, and lack of seed money.

In conjunction with the World Food Program, USAID had been providing food to the most vulnerable. USAID also supported emergency humanitarian assistance to the many who fled the ongoing conflict in Sudan and arrived in South Sudan either as returnees or refugees.

Another major intervention by USAID was in healthcare, supporting the provision of antiretrovirals to those living with HIV and providing maternal health services. This is not only South Sudan's reality but also the reality of many poorer countries, including my home country of Kenya.”

Sr. Mūmbi Kīgūtha, CPPS  
Friends in Solidarity with South Sudan



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# Why does the Church support international assistance programs?

- Promotes human life and dignity
- Advances solidarity with poorer nations
- Enhances security throughout the world

**Foreign aid is not optional.**

*It is a “moral responsibility to protect human lives threatened by hunger, disease, crushing poverty and conflict, and to assist ‘the least of these’.”*  
—USCCB



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# What does Catholic Social Teaching have to say about foreign aid?

Four principles of Catholic Social Teaching guide our support for foreign assistance.

1. Defense of the life and dignity of the human person.
2. Promotion of the common good through participation and subsidiarity.
3. Option for the poor and vulnerable.
4. Solidarity through the pursuit of justice and peace.



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# What priorities and reforms does the Church recommend for U.S. foreign aid?

Five funding priorities and reforms promoted by Catholic Relief Services:

1. Prioritize programs that protect life and dignity.
2. Target the most poor and vulnerable.
3. Promote good stewardship of taxpayer dollars.
4. Work with faith-based organizations and other civil society actors.
5. Fund local organizations.



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# What is MOGC's view of the dismantling of USAID?

- USAID and U.S. foreign assistance in general have flaws and reforms would be welcome.
  - Need a more diverse workforce that includes partnering with local organizations.
  - Need to center local knowledge and priorities.
  - Need a complaint mechanism.
  - Need to address persistent on-the-ground security concerns, weaknesses in governance, and corruption.
- USAID does crucial work around the world that saves lives and should not end.
- USAID should not be merged into State Department.
- Waste, fraud and abuse can be addressed through monitoring & evaluation, and regular audits.



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# What can U.S. Catholics do?

- **Three Ways to Advocate for Foreign Aid Today**  
<https://maryknollogc.org/action/three-ways-advocate-foreign-aid>
  - Write to Secretary of State Marco Rubio on the State Department website.
  - Write to Congress.
  - Call the in-State or DC offices of your members of Congress.
- **Sign up for legislative visits with Catholic Relief Services**  
<https://support.crs.org/form/register-congressional-visit>



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Q&A

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