

## **Budget decisions are tests of our morality**

I urge all people of faith, through prayer and fasting, to ask God for guidance as our nation makes decisions about our priorities as a people. Budgets are moral documents, and we face defining ethical choices in reducing our nation's deficits — but not at the expense of hungry and poor people. Many of us serve daily-increasing needs for emergency shelter, food from pantries or soup kitchens, and job training. Instead of cutting programs that reduce poverty, we should make them more effective.

National leaders must consider tax revenues, military spending and entitlements as ways to share sacrifice and cut deficits. Creating decent-wage jobs is the best path out of poverty, and restoring growth is a powerful way to reduce deficits.

To promote a better, safer world, let us urge leaders to protect and improve humanitarian assistance. We are called to share our blessings with love, justice and a special priority for those who are poor.

—**SISTER M. GRATIA L'ESPERANCE**  
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