



January is Catholic Schools Month

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Catholic Charities USA leader urges service

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HARTFORD – With an eye to the history of Catholic social welfare in the United States, the president of Catholic Charities USA urged unfaltering commitment to serving the poor and a collective vision to eradicate poverty in the future.

Speaking Dec. 3 at the annual Help and Hope Breakfast, Father Larry Snyder congratulated Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Hartford on its 90th anniversary while noting that 2010 was also the national agency's 100th.

The event was a fund-raiser for Catholic Charities' many programs for needy children in the Archdiocese of Hartford. Bishop Peter A. Rosazza was presented the Help and Hope Award for his longstanding commitment to the mission of Catholic Charities.

Catholic social welfare programs in this country began in 1927 when Ursuline Sisters from Paris went to New Orleans to establish a hospital and school and outreach efforts to prostitutes. As dioceses opened throughout the country, Catholic social welfare efforts spread in similar fashion, Father

Snyder told the 300 attendees of the annual Help and Hope Breakfast.

In 1910, the year Catholic Charities was established on the campus of The Catholic University of America in Washington, more than half of the Catholics in the United States were immigrants in need of assimilation, he said.

In response, the Church in America established health care systems that would serve the immigrants and other needy people, founded schools to educate them and established social welfare offices and programs. Today, he said, the Catholic Health Association, Catholic school system and Catholic Charities are the largest entities of their type.

"That's the way we, as a Church, responded. We did it because the need is great, but more important, we did it because our faith, our religion demanded it," Father Snyder said.

Father Snyder said that America is at "a crossroads" today as it was a century ago. He said back then, Pope Leo XIII's "transforming encyclical" *Rerum Novarum* (On Capital and Labor) served as "a kind of call to arms by the Pope" that helped the Church in America

establish the health care, educational and social welfare systems that have withstood the test of time.

He suggested that Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical *Caritas Veritate* (Charity is in the Heart of the Church) could serve a similar purpose for the Church in America as it heads into the future.

In response to today's challenges, Father Snyder said, "I think we need, as a Church and as a nation, to look at the advice that's in that encyclical."

He pointed to Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Hartford, which each year helps about 35,000 people in need throughout the Archdiocese, as illustrating that "we are still responding. We are responding by serving as best we can in spite of all the need."

He added, "The other thing I think that we can do, or need to do, is to make a real commitment to reduce poverty." Catholic Charities USA has been working for several years on a campaign to reduce poverty in America by 50 percent by the year 2020.

Father Snyder congratulated Archbishop Henry J. Mansell; Rose Alma Senatore, chief executive officer of Catholic Charities for the



PRIEST GIVES KEYNOTE – Father Larry Snyder, president of Catholic Charities USA, speaks on Dec. 3 at the Help and Hope Breakfast of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Hartford. (Photo by Bob Mullen)

Archdiocese; and all who work for and otherwise support the agency on its 90th anniversary.

Ms. Senatore and Archbishop Mansell presented the Help and

Hope Award to Bishop Rosazza who, as Ms. Senatore put it, "best exemplifies our mission to promote the dignity, self-sufficiency and human potential of those in need."

"The right to life is the fundamental right." — Pope John Paul II