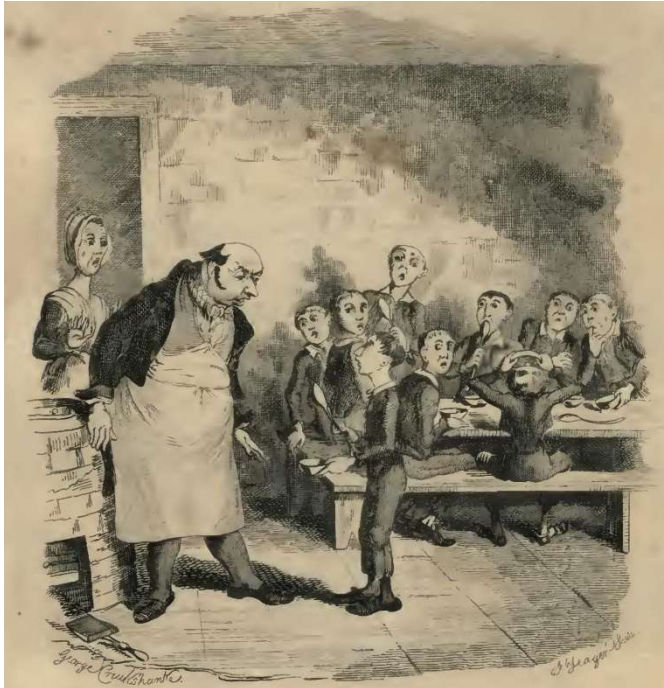




July 2024

Media Release

Fund the foodbanks, feed the poor!



‘Please, sir, I want some more.’
The master was a fat, healthy man; but he turned very pale. He gazed in stupefied astonishment on the small rebel for some seconds, and then clung for support to the copper. The assistants were paralysed with wonder; the boys with fear. ‘What!’ said the master at length, in a faint voice. ‘Please, sir,’ replied Oliver, ‘I want some more.’

(Original Illustration by George Cruikshank)¹

It is alarming that these words of fiction, published in Charles Dickens’ *‘Oliver Twist’* in 1839 are still relevant 185 years later. Moreover, that this should be the current plea of one in five children who will go hungry in Aotearoa, New Zealand in 2024.²

Want and need is the age-old battle of imbalance between power and authority, as clearly depicted in the scene above. Yet even today, as with our young fictional literary hero, it is not an act of rebellion or defiance that people ask or seek food assistance. It is the tangible measure of hunger, desperation and need in our society.

Our collective ‘stupefied astonishment’ and mortified response should question why government funding once allocated to foodbanks has, by all accounts, disappeared.

¹ The Project Gutenberg eBook. *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens. (2014).

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/46675/46675-h/46675-h.htm>

² KidsCan. *Our Charitable Work in NZ*. (n.d.) KidsCan - NZ Childrens Charity & Charitable Trust

Child Poverty Action Group. *CPAG thrilled healthy lunches stay, but asks why so many are going hungry*. (May 2024). <https://www.cpag.org.nz/media-releases/cpag-thrilled-healthy-lunches-stay-but-asks-why-so-many-are-going-hungry#:~:text=One%20in%20five%20children%20in,living%20in%20geographically%20deprived%20areas>.

How is it that supporting the “squeezed middle” in this year’s Budget, can squeeze the life out of foodbank funding for our most vulnerable?

Foodbank collectives are united in their response that a reduction in government funding will reduce the amount of food and support provided, perpetuating a brutal and often unbreakable cycle of hardship, hunger and poverty.³

Lorraine Elliott, Vicar for Social Impact and Communications for the Catholic Diocese of Auckland states: “Every food bank, no matter the size or origin, is fulfilling a desperate need in our community. This need, this hunger – is not shrinking, but only growing daily due to cost of living expenses.”

‘For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.’ (Matt 25:35)

Feeding the poor and disadvantaged through the funding of foodbanks can be considered corporal acts of mercy, love, charity and justice because it is a direct method of addressing the immediate temporal needs and rights of others.

The Justice and Peace Commission, Catholic Diocese of Auckland reiterates this call to feed the poor and hungry and implores the government to free foodbanks from funding paralysis, reach back into that copper pot of government funding, and when asked – give more to feed more.

Fund the foodbanks, feed the poor!

Issued on behalf of Bishop Steve Lowe’s Justice and Peace Commission, Catholic Diocese of Auckland.

Kathleen Ngaronoa Card

Executive Secretary

Justice and Peace Commission | Te Komihana Rongomau, Paetika
Catholic Diocese of Auckland | Te Taumata o te Hahi Katorika

³Newshub. *Foodbank forced to cut 70 pct of recipients as Government funding for charity sector dries up.* (March 2024). [Foodbank forced to cut 70 pct of recipients as Government funding for charity sector dries up | Newshub](#)

The Standard. *Government is cutting funding for food banks.* (June 2024)

<https://thestandard.org.nz/government-is-cutting-funding-for-food-banks/>

Newshub. *Kiwi mum who turned to charity for help says not to 'judge a book by its cover'.* (July 2024). [Kiwi mum who turned to charity for help says not to 'judge a book by its cover' | Newshub](#)