

## *Let the Poor Evangelize Us*

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As Catholic tradition attests, the materially poor have something to teach the rest of us. During my research with young adults in a small working-class town in southwestern Ohio, I was repeatedly humbled to realize that those whom I thought needed saving modeled important virtues I lacked. From them I have learned more deeply about love and loyalty; loss, grief, and remembrance; a radical trust in God; resilience, hope, and perseverance; judging not lest I be judged; and valuing people over things and reality over appearances. Fostering friendship across class lines is necessary, not only for the benefit of the poor, but for the benefit of those who are materially rich but spiritually impoverished. Our encounters with the poor need not be one-sided transfers, but can be participation in a genuine cultural complementarity.