

and demands a bipartisan view to see exactly what the churches' or religious leaders' complaints are because I have one, too; and that is, at a time when this country is facing a fiscal, as well as moral, obligation to the most vulnerable people among us, I see the battle between the haves and the have-nots, the 1 percent and the 99 percent.

I hear the disputes as to whether or not the capitalistic system is fair, but I always took the position that the capitalistic system is an invitation of how Americans and others can invest and make money; and the question of compassion, the question of taking care of your own, the question of illness and jobs and the social issues of today, that it was the Congress that had the responsibility to deal with that rather than to be condemning those who seek to get returns on their investments.

Having said that, let's take a look and see what issues are biblical, what issues are in the Mormon faith, the Muslim faith, the Buddhist faith, the Jewish faith, Protestant and Catholic. It seems to me that throughout every one of these texts, there are things that say that we have a responsibility as human beings and God-fearing people to protect the vulnerable. It is abundantly clear, even in the story about the Good Samaritan. It is also a mandate that when someone is sick that we have a responsibility to assist them.

Certainly, when we talk about Jesus Christ in Matthew where these wealthy people are attempting to get into Heaven and Jesus tells them he was hungry, thirsty, unclothed, in jail, and they didn't do anything to assist him and they said that they don't remember Jesus ever coming asking for anything. Then of course the international world-famous biblical expression is that it wasn't how you treated Jesus, the Son of God, but it was how you treated the lesser of our brothers and sisters.

I think everyone would agree that whether you want to accuse the President of being the food-stamp President or saying he wants to bring socialism to the United States, all of that rhetoric doesn't hide the fact that the poorest of the poor now are suffering more than the people that caused this fiscal crisis.

If we are going to do something about the deficit, we just can't say we've got to cut spending, especially when that spending is exactly for the people that the spiritual leaders have made vows to protect.

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Oh, we don't call it the sick and the disabled and the uneducated, but we do call it Medicaid; we do call it Medicare; we do call it Social Security; we do call it education; and we do call it the ability to get a job so that a person can have not only the income for his family to be able to have the dignity and respect it deserves, but we also have to recognize that from an economic point

of view, it is the people who are in the middle class who are slipping into poverty that makes the difference. I hope that people will give serious thought to the accusation.

#### CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GIRL SCOUTS OF THE USA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Girl Scouts of the USA, which will be celebrating its 100th anniversary on March 12, 2012.

For 100 years, the Girl Scouts have fostered an environment that has created generations of women with sound character and strong leadership skills. Founded by Juliette Gordon Low in Savannah, Georgia, the first troop consisted of just 18 Girl Scouts. Today, there are more than 3.7 million Girl Scouts and more than 100 councils across our Nation. Since its start, more than 50 million women have been a part of this extraordinary organization.

The Girl Scouts of America teaches young women the importance of leadership and of community service. This past Sunday, I proudly participated in Troop 21292's Girl Scout Gold Award ceremony in honoring seven young women from Bucks County, Pennsylvania. It pleases me to recognize these Girl Scouts for their exceptional accomplishment: Christine DiPierro, Catherine Silvernail, Charlotte Triebel, Emily Kraeck, Emily Nowalinski, Kimberly Wodzanowski, and Margaret Zelin. These young ladies exemplify courage, confidence, and character, and have made the world a better place, which has been the mission of the Girl Scouts of the USA for 100 years.

Mr. Speaker, on March 16, 1950, the United States Congress chartered the Girl Scouts of the USA. Today, as the Member of the United States Congress representing Pennsylvania's Eighth District, it is my privilege to congratulate the Girl Scouts of the USA as they commemorate 100 years of building girls of courage, confidence, and character who have truly made the world a better place. Best wishes for success in the next 100 years.

#### CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, as a proud graduate of St. Symphorosa Grammar School and St. Ignatius College Prep, and as a strong supporter of Catholic education, I have again this year introduced a resolution in honor of Catholic Schools Week to highlight the contributions Catholic schools make, not only to the students who attend them, but to our entire Nation.

Since 1974, the National Catholic Educational Association and the

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have provided leadership in planning and organizing Catholic Schools Week. This year, it is celebrated from January 29 through February 5. The theme, "Faith, Academics, Service," celebrates the broad educational experience Catholic school students receive. Catholic school students are not only focused on academic excellence but also on enriching the spiritual character and moral development of young Americans.

America's Catholic schools produce graduates with the skills and integrity needed by our businesses, governments, and communities, emphasizing a well-rounded education and instilling the values of giving back to the community and helping others. Nearly every Catholic school has a community service program, and their students volunteer half-a-million hours every year to their parishes and communities. My own decision to pursue a career in teaching and then in public service was fostered in part by the dedicated teachers throughout my years in Catholic schools.

Today, over 2 million elementary and secondary students are enrolled in nearly 7,000 Catholic schools, where these students typically excel. They surpass their peers in math, science, reading, history, and geography in NAEP tests. The graduation rate for Catholic high school students is 99 percent, and 85 percent of the graduates of these schools attend a 4-year college. As we continue to hear disturbing reports about our national test scores, these statistics are truly remarkable and should be commended.

Notably, the success of Catholic schools does not depend on selectivity. These academic achievements are realized by students from all walks of life. Catholic schools accept 9 out of every 10 students who apply, and are highly effective in providing a quality education to students from every socioeconomic group, especially disadvantaged youths in underserved urban communities. Over the past 30 years, the percentage of minority students enrolled in Catholic schools has more than doubled, and today they constitute almost one-third of all Catholic school students. In times of economic hardship, Catholic schools provide an affordable alternative to other forms of private education.

In addition to producing well-rounded students, Catholic schools save taxpayers billions of dollars each year by lowering the number of students in already overburdened public schools. It is estimated that taxpayers save over \$1 billion from students attending Catholic schools in the Chicago area alone and approximately \$20 billion nationwide. The importance of these savings is undeniable as we in Congress and as lawmakers across the country struggle with deficits.

I was born and raised and live in the Chicago Archdiocese, home to one of the most successful Catholic school