

Pope Francis: 'We have paid too little heed to those who are hungry'

by [Josephine McKenna](#)

November 21, 2014

c. 2014 Religion News Service

ROME (RNS) Market speculation and pursuit of profits are hindering the global fight against hunger and poverty, Pope Francis said Thursday (November 20).

In an address at a U.N. conference in Rome on nutrition, the pope urged the world's wealthiest nations to do more to help those in need.

"Perhaps we have paid too little heed to those who are hungry," the pope said. "It is also painful to see that the struggle against hunger and malnutrition is hindered by 'market priorities.'"

His words were addressed to delegates from more than 170 countries attending the global gathering at the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization.

"The hungry remain, at the street corner, and ask to be recognized as citizens, to receive a healthy diet," he said. "We ask for dignity, not for charity."

The Argentine pope has often called for greater compassion and justice for the world's poor since his election last year, and he has made charity a priority of his pontificate.

He authorized the construction of showers for the homeless next to St. Peter's Basilica and donated various items, including a car, to be raffled off, with the proceeds set aside for the poor.

The pontiff spoke out against "growing individualism and division" in modern societies and the "paradox of plenty," in which the world is producing adequate food to wipe out hunger but failing to feed everyone.

Francis also expressed concern about the damage being done to the planet and called for greater protection for the environment.

“Feed the hungry, save life on the planet,” he said.