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SHARING THE BANQUET Christians work for just economy

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Staff writer

Residents of a neighborhood bereft of a grocery store gather to discuss how to meet their food-purchasing needs.

Bankers and business-owners and government employees sit down for several weeks with neighborhood organizers, clergy and religious to discuss how to bring those standing on the banks of a prosperous river into its economic mainstream.

The insights of academic scholars, economists and business-owners are gathered in a book designed to answer Pope John Paul II's call for a more humane world economy.

These are just a few of the dozens of current efforts in the diocese and throughout the nation and the world, to put a practical face on the Christian ideal of helping the poor and the marginalized.

Over the next several months, a series of articles in the *Catholic Courier* will examine Christian efforts to end poverty and address its causes. In particular, this series will focus on how the practical world of business, finance and government can — and does — ally itself with the spiritual world of faith, charity and justice.

This series will focus on several efforts both here in the diocese, and throughout the U.S. and international church.

Rather than simply charitably giving low-income people the left-overs of the economic banquet enjoyed by the middle- and upper-classes, several groups and individuals from both economic classifications are looking to include the poor in the banquet's planning and preparation.

Much of the thinking undergirding this approach can be found in a Feb. 15 statement released by the Greater Rochester Community of Churches to which the diocese and several churches and parishes belong.

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