Today’s Gospel presents one of the most surprising and unexpected quotes by Jesus in all of scripture, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel….It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs."

What was Matthew’s rationale in including this controversial quote? Perhaps Matthew wished to remind his first century Jewish audience that if Jesus could be moved to share the Good News outside of his own Jewish community, we too should share our gifts from God outside of our local community. What is the relevance for this message today?

It behooves our homilists to remind all of us that the U.S. citizenry is called by the Gospel to share its resources with some of the foreign populations struggling more than any other communities in recent history. Might we recall that up to 20 million people from Nigeria, South Sudan, Yemen, and Somalia and are suffering from famine? Perhaps we need to begin to understand the demographics of these lands; the average American is not very well versed about peoples in poor countries. I found Relief Web’s June 9, 2017 article, “Funding Update: Nigeria, South Sudan, Somalia and Yemen,” helpful.

And what do we have to gain by aiding Syrians forced from their homes due to that country’s civil war? This migration crisis has affected more than any crisis since World War II. They are not natural “allies”; they don’t protect us from our enemies, sell us oil, or even tend to profess Christianity.

It behooves the Catholic community to understand the extent of the danger of proposed cuts by the Trump Administration to international emergency assistance. In words and figures, the USCCB and CRS have explained the Church’s position on the need for the US to aid those suffering from poverty beyond our continent.

The FY 2018 federal budget will be in the heat of discussion in the coming weeks. How does this Gospel strengthen us to continue the fight to protect the most indigent in our world community?

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