

Acknowledgments

Writing a book is like giving birth. Inspiration followed by gestation, the struggle to give life to ideas that swarm, all of which takes time and a huge effort to refine and create something worthwhile. An image sears itself into one's imagination, but how to capture it in words and communicate its beauty? Throughout this process my conviction that social justice is the right of all people, especially those who are poor, urged me to persevere. It is my humble hope that this book will inspire and assist others who will enlarge the circle of care and show how to achieve solidarity in our journey toward a more just and peaceful society.

Many people have inspired me in my quest for justice. First and foremost is my congregation, the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, who have been my companions and provided loving support. The sisters with whom I worked, prayed, and lived were models of charity and justice. Together we have sought to make justice a habit of heart and mind.

I am grateful for the work of the Rev. Dr. Letty M. Russell whose example of liberating Christian education in East Harlem touched my heart, and whose writings gave me renewed enthusiasm for pursuing justice. It was an honor to meet her and to audit her class at Yale Divinity School in the spring of 2006. Letty Russell widened the circle of concern for those on the margins of society as she reached out to welcome and share wisdom with women from third world countries in their pursuit of higher learning.

David K. Shipler is both an excellent writer and a man of great empathy. His book, *The Working Poor*, captures the spirit of hardworking peo-

ple as well as the realities of the social, economic, and political situations that limit their lives. His words gave me hope when I felt overwhelmed by the enormity of poverty in the United States and how deeply poverty limits people's lives.

I wish to thank those who graciously read and commented on the chapters of this book. Sr. Barbara Paul, O.P., former president of our congregation, offered insights from her many years as an educator and as a missionary among the poor of Peru. Rev. Mark Hallinan, S.J., Assistant for Social Ministries for the New York Province of the Society of Jesus, was an able advisor and encouraged my efforts. Sr. Barbara Lenniger, O.P., Executive Director of Thorpe Family Residence and Park Avenue Thorpe in the Bronx, has been an inspiration in terms of her work with formerly homeless women and children and for her efforts to enable the poor to have decent housing. Martin Fergus, recently retired Associate Professor of Political Science at Fordham University, devoted many years to guiding students to understand the reality of poverty, its causes, and the means for seeking social justice. Professor Fergus's comments added immensely to my understanding of poverty and urged me to write so students would grasp both the complexity of the issues and the humanity of those who are poor. James Nickolof, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the College of the Holy Cross, refined and refreshed my understanding of liberation theologies, thanks to his scholarship and especially his experience in Peru working with Gustavo Gutiérrez. My friends and colleagues, Ruth Boser, Valerie Torres, and Tom Moroney provided insight from educational and catechetical perspectives, as well as examples of dedicated service to the poor. Finally, I am most grateful to Harold Horell, Assistant Professor of Religious Education at Fordham University, who consistently encouraged my quest for justice. His buoyant spirit and absolute dedication to truth inspired me to think globally. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Horell for challenging me to write with depth and clarity. Truly, there could be no better guide.

I am grateful to Twenty-Third Publications for the opportunity to publish this book. Special thanks to Dan Connors, Editorial Director, who guided this venture and valued its success and to John van Bommel who encouraged my writing in the initial and final stages of the book's

development. With their support, the message of justice for all will have a larger audience.

Thanks also to those who assisted my research at the Walsh Library on the Rose Hill campus of Fordham University, especially Helena Cuniffe and Bob Hinkel; and José De Leon and Rick Raguso who provided expert technological assistance.

It is my ardent hope that many will share my enthusiasm and commitment to making a place at the table of life for all people, especially the poor and oppressed.