

# ED WOULD BE FURIOUS.

For nearly two decades, Monsignor Ed Ryle looked out for Arizona's poor, vulnerable and sick, for people down on their luck, often without them ever realizing it and never asking for anything in return.

Race didn't matter to Monsignor Ryle. Neither did age. Nor religion. What mattered to him was people and how they were treated.

He walked the halls of the Arizona Legislature, stopping to chat with lawmakers, letting them know when people were suffering and how they, as trustees of government, could help.

Just his presence at a legislative hearing would be enough to remind lawmakers they had a duty to the public good, rather than some political dogma.

Msgr. Ryle retired in 2003. He died in December 2005.

Now, the very programs he and others worked so hard to build or improve are in danger of being dismantled. Programs like AHCCCS, the state's successful health plan for low-income people; long-term care; home and community based services; child welfare, domestic violence and safety net services – these are what some legislators now want to discard in order to balance the budget.

It's as if this were the only option.

Yes, Arizona has a budget problem, as do most other states. But we need to remind our legislators that balancing a budget isn't only about dollars; it's about people.

A budget is not the same as a ledger. It is the ultimate public policy tool. It speaks to our values. It is a moral document.

Dismantling the services that people rely on is not the answer. Especially now, when so many are losing their jobs and need the assistance of those very services.

What's more, it doesn't even solve the problem. If we slash budgets, we eliminate jobs along with the programs and services. And

that adds to unemployment, worsening our situation.

In addition, some programs targeted for budget cuts, such as AHCCCS, receive matching federal funds. So for every dollar cut, the state will lose two federal dollars, meaning the net impact to us will be three times what the Legislature is cutting.

There's another proposal at the Legislature that doesn't make sense: Eliminating or postponing the state's annual revenue-sharing payments to the cities and counties. They need that

It cannot operate like a business because it's not a business. It cannot operate like a family because it's not a family. It is a distinct entity, representatives of the people, elected to build and maintain a system that provides services and a better life for all.

Our legislators already rejected Gov. Brewer's plan for a modest tax increase. It's anathema to them. Some hold a curious ideological notion that a no-tax government is the best government. Many feel that the voters won't stand for new taxes and will kick them out of office the first chance they get.

## YOU SHOULD BE, TOO!

money for police and fire protection, jails, garbage collection, courts, water delivery and sewers.

We can't just slice up the budget until nothing's left. We'd be imposing a scorched-earth policy on our own people.

We've got to keep in mind one fundamental fact: Government exists so people may do collectively what they otherwise cannot do individually.

We think they are wrong.

After all, voters increased taxes on themselves to fund teacher salary increases, health care for the poor, and road construction through the initiative process, when our legislators refused to act.

We think that once voters understand the magnitude of our budget problems, they'll be okay with a modest tax increase, and a serious look at repealing tax exemptions that have long sapped our budget of needed dollars.

What we think they won't understand and won't accept is a government so weakened that it can barely provide essential services.

We think they'll feel disappointed – even betrayed – if, after losing a job, they seek help from a governmental agency and are turned away because of budget cuts.

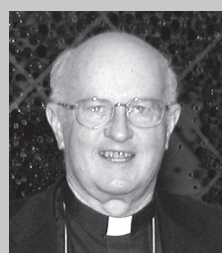
We think the people understand – perhaps more clearly than their elected representatives do – that a government of principle must be based on fairness.

It's time that voices of social justice and reason are added to the mix. It's something Monsignor Ryle would have done.

### THE HUMAN TOLL

#### PROPOSED CUTS TO THE 2010 STATE BUDGET

- **17,400 seniors receiving in-home care will have all services eliminated.**
- **38,000 families, and about 100,000 children, removed from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.**
- **10,000 children denied in-home support services**
- **9,000 persons experiencing domestic violence and homelessness turned away from shelters.**
- **6,000 disabled people cut from vocational rehabilitation programs that help them gain employment.**



#### **WORKING FOR JUSTICE, DIGNITY, AND THE COMMON GOOD**

***The Monsignor Edward J. Ryle Fund has been founded to honor the memory and extend the legacy of a remarkable man. The Fund springs from the example of a lifetime of personal and public service to the people of Phoenix and the State of Arizona, especially the most vulnerable and the disenfranchised. Its success will be measured by a growing crescendo of many, if lesser, voices speaking in the public square on behalf of reasoned discourse and social justice.***