

LOOKING THROUGH STAINED GLASS



A Column by Fr. Tom

Feeding Those in Need – Seen and Unseen

Last week, we spoke of the work of our St. Vincent de Paul Council. Towards the end of that column, we mentioned that St. Vincent de Paul is also involved in helping those who are in need of food. At least two other ministries, as well as members of the staff of St. Paul of the Cross, collaborate in this effort.

As we mentioned in the last column, the pandemic certainly affected a lot of people financially, but one of the things that we know is that there are always people who will be hungry. In fact, even Jesus Himself said, “The poor you will always have with you...” [MT 26:11] Further, Jesus was actually quoting from Deuteronomy, where Moses tells the Israelites, “The land will never lack for needy persons; that is why I command you: ‘Open your hand freely to your poor and to your needy kin in your land.’” [DT 15:11] In other words, this is a perennial situation, but in the quote from Deuteronomy, we see how we are called to respond: “Open your hand freely...” It is from this perspective that St. Paul of the Cross has tried to attend to the needy, especially the hungry.

Starting from the simplest of remedies, we have a number of people who assist in our Sandwich Makers Ministry. Under normal circumstances, some members of the Sandwich Makers Ministry gather on Monday afternoons at St. Paul of the Cross to create a sort of “bologna sandwich assembly line.” Their efforts are augmented by a number of people who make bologna sandwiches in their homes and deliver them to the Church. Some people have even gathered friends, neighbors or co-workers to assist in the effort. During the pandemic, the “onsite” ministry had to be suspended for a while but the “offsite” efforts still continue. The sandwiches that are made are

delivered to St. Ann Place, whose ministry gives daily lunches to the homeless. Sometimes the sandwiches are even used for “street ministry,” i.e. given directly to the homeless where they are.

A much larger effort goes into the Van Ministry and St. Vincent de Paul Ministry grocery bags. Many people from our parish bring non-perishable groceries to the Parish. To the groceries our parishioners contribute, food stuffs that are obtained from foodbanks and surplus grocery items are added. The Van Ministry and St. Vincent de Paul then package the food into individual bags that each contain a variety of food. These bags are then delivered to other area ministries, as well as poor and senior housing facilities. Some of the bags remain here at St. Paul of the Cross where members of the staff distribute them to the poor and homeless people who come to the office.

How can you get involved in these ministries?

There are several ways:

1. You can make bologna sandwiches at home and deliver them to the Parish Office by Tuesday at 5 PM. Please check our bulletin first or call the Office to find out the best way to make and package the sandwiches.
2. You can purchase and donate non-perishable groceries. Please see the bulletin for the types of food that are most needed.
3. You can help the Van Ministry and St. Vincent de Paul in packaging and/or delivering the grocery bags.
4. You can always donate financially.

