



Minute of Mercy

SHELTER THE HOMELESS

It's summertime and time for summer fun in the sun. At the day's end, we return home, shower, and relax in our nice air-conditioned home for a restful night's sleep, a place of security, a place we call home. Unfortunately, this is not the scenario that plays out for many people. So many are without homes due to various reasons and will be struggling in this brutal July heat with no refuge. It would most likely not be very prudent to invite just any homeless person into our home; there are designated shelters that are provided for them. However, that does not dismiss our part to help the homeless. We can provide them shelter within our hearts in prayer for them. We can volunteer our time to assist in homeless shelters showing them the love and dignity they deserve as a child of God. We must always see Christ in all our brothers and sisters. Let us remember in the Gospels when Jesus tells us about the "Judgment of Nations," "whatever you do to the least brothers of mine, you did to Me." (Matthew 25: 31-46) There is another scriptural reference to contemplate, when Jesus laments that "foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest His head." (Luke 9:58,59) It is in this Gospel, that the homeless can unite their sufferings with Our Lord.

In his book, "You Did It To Me" by Fr. Michael Gaitley, Fr. Michael relates a story of Eric Mahl, a former NFL football player and his desire to show mercy to the poor and did so by living among them. Having lived among the poor he concluded what he felt what all of us could do for the homeless. The following is his quote:

"You don't have to give them money, and often that's not a good idea, but at least give them a little bit of your time and recognize their dignity in the way you look at them and talk to them. So many people ignore the homeless, yet when you treat them with respect and love, it restores their dignity, and that's true mercy". He also reminds us to shelter the homeless not necessarily with our homes but with our hearts – and with a grin, he added, "Don't forget the apostolate of smiling!"

In this Year of Mercy, let us not be so consumed in our lives as to forget those who struggle everyday from the lack of food, clothing and shelter. Remember, this is how we, not only as a nation, but as individuals, will be judged by Our Lord.

Mercy in Action

*This week's **Mercy in Action** is for all of St. Peter Parish to pray for homeless. A list of homeless shelters is provided on the Year of Mercy table if you wish to volunteer your time.*