

## **Request to be read at Masses, February 13-14, 2021**

Dear friends,

Monsignor Jim Barta once said to me: Quakers are known as peacemakers, and Amish as furniture-makers (and living simply), but what are Catholics known for?

What comes readily to mind are things like rituals, rules, and the rod of punishment; Bingo, fish fries, capes, and swords. Those aren't bad, but not really powerful enough to attract or retain members in the Catholic Church.

So, what is? Here's the deal, Parker: We are followers of Jesus in his Catholic Church.

For us, living by his teaching and example are vital, and the most important is love of God and neighbor. Loving God by loving our neighbor is practiced by helping people who can't protect themselves – like the unborn and immigrants – or provide for themselves, such as the poor.

Protecting and providing for others is pure and undefiled religion. It is the basis on which Jesus will judge us: those who did will enjoy heaven, those who did not will not.

It also has the ability to cover a multitude of sins and it can thwart the worldly allure and spiritual threat of power, privilege and perks.

"No one among them was in need." – That was said of the first Christians, in the Acts of the Apostles, because they shared with the poor. Can that be said of our generation too? It can if we share - that's what Jesus wants us to be known for! Yes, devout prayer, a beautiful Mass, great RE or Catholic school, but not without serving the poor.

When Catholic Charities makes its appeal for 2021, help them to help the poor. And helping them (please, God) will help us to be able to answer Monsignor Barta honestly: We Catholics are known for helping people who can't provide for or protect themselves.

Confident of your generosity, and grateful for it, I am.

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
Michael O. Jackels  
Archbishop of Dubuque