

RESPECTING LIFE BY HOUSING THE HOMELESS

A paraphrase of the prayer of St. Francis that might be in the mouth of a homeless person is "where there is despair, let me have hope." In Minnesota over 13,000 people are homeless every night.

In the Old Testament God makes it the responsibility of every believer to care for widows and orphans as God cares for them.

"You shall not wrong any widow or orphan. If they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry" (Exodus 22.22).

"The Lord your God is the God of gods, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, who befriends the alien, feeding and clothing him" (10.18).

In the New Testament, Matthew 25, Jesus tells who the Son of Man will welcome into his kingdom at the end of time—those who care for the least.

I was hungry and you gave me food.

I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.

I was a stranger and you welcomed me.

The homeless person is not really a stranger to us. We see them walking the streets with their heavy backpacks and standing at freeway entrances with cardboard signs. We get to know them. But what about the more hidden kind of homelessness? Many people are only a paycheck away from homelessness. The shelters are full of families who have lost their homes or apartments and have overstayed their welcome with friends and relatives. Their problem is often unemployment or illness.

St. Stan's has a Fall Warmth and Clothing Drive in October to provide the necessities to people in need. Watch for announcements in the bulletin. Shelters are always looking for volunteers, so they can stay open on small budgets. These are works of charity. The work of justice attacks the underlying problems that lead to homelessness. We can act in justice in November by voting for state and federal legislators who won't let people fall through the cracks.

-Social Justice Committee-