

Features

COURIER-JOURNAL/
CATHOLIC CHARITIES
CHRISTMAS FUND
% CATHOLIC CHARITIES
1150 BUFFALO ROAD
ROCHESTER, NY 14624



C-J, Catholic Charities seek aid for needy

51 Rene is a young mother of an eleven-month-old boy, and is expecting another baby next month. At present, she is living in an apartment furnished only with a bed. She needs two cribs and anything else that would make her home more habitable. She would also appreciate baby clothes and something Christmasy.

52 Mrs. B. is separated from her husband. She has a married son who lives out of state and a 19-year-old who is currently living with her. Her teenage son doesn't work, but she does not want to kick him out. Mrs. B. has great difficulty in translating her thoughts to words. She often needs help in making a phone call. She also needs food since she subsists on Social Security and says her son eats a lot.

53 Mr. and Mrs. B. have been married about three years and have one child. Mr. B. has had difficulty in obtaining work because of health reasons. The baby needs food and medical services, but the family has been unable to meet the cost of medical care.

54 Mrs. A. is a single parent with two children, aged six and two-and-a-half. She is separated from her husband, whose whereabouts are unknown and who offers no support for the family. Because Mrs. A.'s younger child has cerebral palsy and is confined to a wheelchair, he requires special care. Mrs. A. works at a local hospital as a housekeeper. Her salary barely covers the cost of rent and food. She desperately needs financial aid to provide clothing for her children, diapers and medicine, and to cover the cost of child-care while she works.

55 Tom has cancer, and went through two operations. He and his young son are cared for by his mother, who is in poor health herself. There is little money left after rent and prescriptions. Their church helps regularly with

food and clothing. They need help for Christmas.

56 Mrs. S. is the sole support of her family. She is on medical disability, and is frequently incapacitated by sickness. However, she gives generously of her time to helping the church. Living expenses and medical expenses drain what little aid she receives. She and her teen-age daughter could use a donation of money which would ensure a happier Christmas.

57 Mrs. B. is an elderly parishioner. She and her husband live on Social Security. Her husband recently entered the hospital quite suddenly, and will remain hospitalized. When Mrs. B.'s Social Security check did not arrive, she panicked as there was no food in the house and no money to buy food. Living and medical expenses have taken what little money Mr. and Mrs. B. had. Mrs. B. needs financial help with her food, household and medical expenses.

58 Mr. and Mrs. X. are in their 70s. Mr. X. lost his job and pension when his company declared bankruptcy. Shortly afterward, Mrs. X. became very ill for several years. They used all their savings and sold their home in order to pay medical costs. Now they live day-to-day, barely getting by. Mr. X. is crippled by a leg wound from World War II, and cannot walk for long distances. Their 11-year-old car needs major repairs, or will have to be replaced. It is impossible for them to walk to stores, doctors and therapy. Mr. X. has been an active member of the community and church throughout his life, always volunteering whenever possible.

59 Mrs. M. is an elderly parishioner who is legally blind. She must go to the hospital several times a week for dialysis. She lives on Social Security. Mrs. M. needs financial aid to meet all of her personal and household expenses. A volunteer is also needed to

help with what Mrs. M. is unable to do because of her physical handicaps.

60 A. is a 94-year-old woman in a nursing home who has worked hard all her life and who has outlived her whole family. She needs visitors who can converse with her in Polish and who can perform small acts of kindness or bring holiday gifts to meet her simple needs.

61 M. is a single parent from another country with a four-year-old son. She is not eligible for public assistance until problems with her husband are resolved. M. is unable to seek employment because she has no family or friends to care for her small child.

62 Living in a rural area, Mr. D. was unable to find work for two years. He recently invested his limited resources in a less-than-dependable car in order to find a job and commute to it. During this time, he has been having serious difficulty supporting his wife and baby.

63 Jane is a young single mother of four children. In her search for employment, she discovered she had no marketable skills. Because she decided to return to school to improve herself, Jane lost some of her public assistance benefits.

64 After a rather stormy marriage, Mark's wife walked out on him, leaving him with two small daughters and several large bills. In addition to his concern for the emotional well-being of his children, Mark is worried about providing them with a happy Christmas and meeting his financial obligations at the same time.

65 When Nancy's husband suddenly left her and their four children, she had trouble making ends meet with the income from her part-time job. After her subsequent divorce, Nancy found herself homeless and in desperate need of help from family, friends and

private agencies.

66 Mr. and Mrs. T. live in a small rural community. Mr. T. manages to support his family with his regular job. But the T's have no medical coverage, and the recent birth of their baby put an incredible strain on their finances.

67 V. is a young man who came from the south in search of a better life for himself and his family. He found a good job and was saving to bring his wife and four children north when the small factory where he was working closed. Without his last expected paycheck, V. was unable to afford the bus tickets for his family.

68 Carol is a young mother of four small children. Her public assistance leaves little extra for transportation from her rural location. Carol has to depend on agency support to get her and her children to necessary appointments.

69 Rita's daughter got into trouble and left her six-month-old son with Rita. Her small Social Security check does not cover the needs of this grandson.

70 Vincent is an intellectually limited man who lives on a small monthly check. His landlord helps him to manage this, but Vincent would have a difficult time surviving without the local lunch program and the food cupboard.

71 Sue's life was tinged with violence because her husband, a Vietnam veteran, had dramatic mood swings. When he recently took his own life, she was eligible for no veterans' benefits for herself or her six children. She receives a check from Supplemental Security Income (SSI), but has difficulty managing, especially at holiday time.

72 Susan is a single mother of three children. Two of the three are handicapped. They are currently living in an abandoned car because their house needs a furnace, complete plumbing and entryways. Since they live in a remote area, they need reliable transportation and access to adequate health care.

73 Mary, an elderly mother of 11 lives in a remote rural area. Their four-room house needs a roof, indoor plumbing and hot water. They also need reliable transportation.

74 The H. family of four includes a father who is disabled. They live in a very old mobile home which needs hot water, a bathroom, complete plumbing and roof.

75 Mrs. A., an elderly woman, lives alone in a remote rural area. Except for the one room in which she lives, her house is uninhabitable. The house needs: a new wood stove and chimney due to a chimney fire; insulation and windows since the windows were broken in a hail storm; indoor plumbing — Mrs. A. currently uses the pump in her kitchen; and an indoor bathroom.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The "100 cases" described in this annual series are representative of the many needy people served by the various agencies affiliated with Catholic Charities of the diocese. Contributions should be mailed or delivered to: 1988 Christmas Fund, c/o Catholic Charities, Diocese of Rochester, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624.

Our journey from darkness to light

By Gretchen Dent and Pam Schaeffer
It may seem odd that the Church begins its liturgical year with the season of Advent. It does not seem to be a season for new beginnings in the Northeast, as we observe the environment around us. Everything is dying, becoming barren and stark. Each day brings more and more darkness into our lives. The air is cold and bitter. We hear the cries for help from those who are hungry and cold, and see the devastation of those who are unemployed. We do our best to push away the cold and darkness of this season by filling our homes with light and color, lighting fires and gathering at parties to laugh with others, but often the cold and darkness seep through.

Perhaps the Church had great foresight in placing this season where it is, for it is a challenge to find hope amid the darkness of winter and the chaos in our world today. And yet, did not our hope rise out of death and darkness? Christ's death brought about His resurrection, which gave us our greatest hope of all — salvation.

Life itself is a journey that again and again leads from darkness to light. The persistent pattern follows from the very moment of birth to death and rebirth into eternal life. From the darkness of the womb into the light of His creation, from the darkness of sin to new life in Christ — over and over again we grope in dark-

ness, stumble in shadows, always seeking light. As Church, we gather each year to reflect upon this pattern. We need this time to stand together and face the darkness. Here we find unity and commonality. Our fears, sufferings and pain — all that represents darkness — can be reconciled; all that brings darkness into our lives can be dispelled as we make this journey together.

How comforting it is to share our common fears; how reassuring to learn that others also sense times of hopelessness. Each life in some way has experienced moments of doubt, despair and gloom. All have felt the bleakness of questions left unanswered. We all long for the light that dimly beckons at the far end of our darkened tunnel. The light represents liberation from gloom, release from the darkness that confines. It speaks to us of healing and reconciliation, comfort and peace.

Advent provides us with time to reach for that light, to look closely at our lives and find Christ's presence in the midst of our failings, confusions and struggles. As Christians, we need to embrace the darkness of Advent and find God in the barrenness and darkness of our lives and the world around us. It is because of our belief in His promise that we can find hope amid the turmoil and light amid the darkness. We need the time of Advent to allow God to warm our hearts with the power of His love,



Advent Reflections

and light up our searching minds with His Word.

We are a struggling, fragile, hopeful and searching people of God. Advent provides us with time to fill ourselves with strength from His love so we may walk out of the darkness into His wondrous light.

Warmed, reconciled, healed and at peace with ourselves and one another, we will be able to raise our hearts and voices in praise and thanks as we celebrate His coming, both into our lives today and with joyous hope for His coming in the future.

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