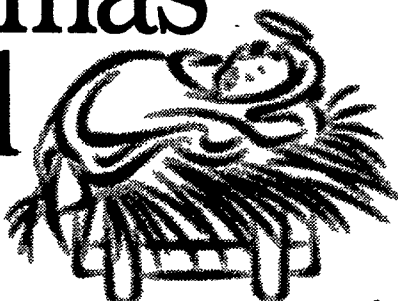


DIOCESAN FEATURE

Catholic Courier + Catholic Charities

Christmas Appeal

WEEK I



A flurry of tidying and preparation typically occurs when someone special is expected, whether it's a guest staying for only a short time, like company for dinner, or a long-term addition, like a new baby.

This feature begins a series of Advent reflections to help Christians "tidy up" and spiritually prepare for the celebration of Christ's birth. These reflections are accompanied by brief accounts of individuals or families assisted by Christmas Appeal donations.

This marks the appeal's 24th year during which thousands of people facing short-term financial crises have been helped.

Reflection:

❖ Longing for safety and security

Safety and security are among the most primitive needs of all humans. During a time when people long for safety and security in their homes, streets, jobs and world, they should nevertheless be filled with hope when they hear the Lord's promise to Jeremiah (33:14-16): "The days are coming ... when Judah shall be safe and Jerusalem dwell secure; this is what they shall call her, 'The Lord our justice.'"

This "justice" represents the importance of choosing honest relationships.

Without worthy relationships people can have neither safety nor security. Without justice between husbands and wives, parents and children, society can have little safety and security in its homes.

Without justice between rich and poor, one race and another, people will continue to be afraid to walk outside at night in their own neighborhoods. Without justice and

Diocesan Catholic Charities agencies are often the only sources of safety and security for the poor and oppressed in our neighborhoods.

proper relationships, people around the world will continue to resort to war. The need for safety and security must be met if the world is to foster healthy relationships in homes and justice in society.

Where can people begin to make a difference? Perhaps it will be within the home, righting relationships with a spouse or a child. Or it might be in the way people prepare for Christmas by including those in need. Jesus calls on His people, as did the prophets of the Old Testament, to see to the safety and security of the *anawim*, the little ones. This idea of tending to the least — widows, orphans, strangers and poor — will form

the basis of this series.

A family Advent activity:

Reward a child's good deed by allowing him or her to put some straw in the manger crib to cushion the Christ Child. This can serve as a reminder that what we do for the *anawim* — the little ones, the "least" among us — we do for Jesus.

Strangers

"Thus says the Lord, do what is right and just. Rescue the victim from the hand of the oppressor. Do not wrong or oppress the stranger, the widow or the orphan ..." (Jer. 22:3)

Traditionally, the stranger in the Old Testament was forced to leave his or her homeland because of such reasons as plague or famine. Today's stranger may be a refugee or migrant, someone uprooted in a search for work in a strange town, or a homeless person alienated from family because of disease, mental illness, alcoholism or drug addiction.

❖ Christmas Appeal funds make emergency-assistance possible. Donations may provide hospitality, and with it safety and security, to a stranger such as Jorge, who walked into Geneva's Finger Lakes Social Ministry with his young son very early one morning. After arriving from Florida, the father and son had slept in their car in the parking lot all night. Hurricanes had destroyed their apartment building, taking with it Jorge's maintenance job. The Department of Social Services could help them to find

an apartment, but they also needed food, clothing and furniture.

Christmas Appeal funds helped provide bedrolls and food from a local emergency-food pantry. After a hot meal at the lunch program, Jorge and his son were given information on how to apply for food stamps. After having their basic needs met, they were better able to make a new start.

❖ Richard, a young migrant worker, traveled by bus from Mexico in hopes of finding work on an area farm. The bus left him off in the city, many miles from any farms. Without any money, shelter or transportation, he slept outside in the rain all night. He eventually found his way to a social services office, where calls were made and a job was found. The only problem for Richard was providing his own transportation and no public agencies could offer such assistance. Christmas Appeal funds allowed Finger Lakes Social Ministry to help Richard join relatives in a Wayne County migrant camp.

❖ Diocesan Urban Services depends on Christmas Appeal funds to help parishes and other organizations

provide emergency assistance. One such organization that benefits from donations to the Christmas Appeal is Rochester's House of Mercy, 725 Hudson Ave., where Sisters Grace Miller, RSM, and Rita Lewis, RSM, provide hospitality to people who have no other place to call home.

Approximately 1,400 people pass through the House of Mercy each month looking for food, shelter, warm clothes, a helping hand, or a familiar face. John, for example, had his own apartment but came to the House of Mercy every night to sleep on a couch where he could count on the safety and security of people he called his friends.

❖ At St. Stanislaus Church, 1124 Hudson Ave., Rochester, many people who seek assistance have no one else to help them. Sister Mary Ellen Cragan, SSJ, recently retired pastoral associate, recalled a man just released from prison. His family refused to take him in, forcing him to live in a local garage. Christmas Appeal funds allowed the city parish to respond to his needs when he came to the door begging for something to eat.

What is the Christmas Appeal?

It is a cooperative effort of the *Catholic Courier* and diocesan Catholic Charities to raise funds that will help people in desperate financial crises.

For 24 years, the appeal has enabled the Catholic community to help thousands of people in 12 counties to meet life's basic needs. Christmas Appeal funds have been there for them when no other sources of aid were available.

Who benefits from it?

Funding from the Christmas Appeal helps individuals and families in short-term financial crises. These are people who

have no financial resources and are either awaiting or ineligible for assistance through other sources.

How does it work?

The appeal consists of a series of articles in the *Catholic Courier* and a direct-mail solicitation of prior donors. Appeal proceeds are allocated to the emergency funds of the following diocesan agencies: Catholic Family Center, 26.33 percent; Finger Lakes Social Ministry, 26.33 percent; Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier, 26.33 percent; Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation, 10 percent; and diocesan Urban Services, 11 percent.

Please use my donation to help a neighbor in need.

This gift is in honor/memory of (circle one):

Name: _____

Name _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

City _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Mail check (payable to "Christmas Appeal") and this coupon to: Christmas Appeal, c/o Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, New York 14624

LAMPUGHTER

Enjoy our elegant yet casual atmosphere featuring Italian specialties, steaks & seafood

Serving
Christmas Eve • 5-9pm
New Year's Eve • 5-12M

Lunch, Tues.-Fri.
Dinner, Mon.-Sat.

Located at
Creekside Plaza • 831 Fetzner Rd.
225-2500
Down the road from the Greece Marriott

Celebrate the Holidays with One World Goods

Give a gift that gives twice
Volunteer Staffed and Non-profit

ONE WORLD GOODS
118 Fairport Village Landing
Fairport, NY 14450
716-223-6370
Holiday Hours: M-W & Sat 10-5, Thur & Fri 10-9, Sun 12-5

\$6.00

SAINT MARTHA'S COOK BOOK

Patron Saint of Cooks and Housewives

Compiled by
Rev. Lawrence G. Lovasik, S.V.D.

SOUPS
SALADS
BREADS
MEAT AND POULTRY
SEAFOODS
CASSEROLES
DESSERTS
CAKES
PIES
COOKIES

Address all orders to:
Father Lawrence G. Lovasik, S.V.D.
211 West 7th Avenue
Tarentum, PA 15084
(Add \$2.00 for postage)

Please patronize our advertisers