

Bishop Sullivan Center

NEWS & REFLECTIONS

December 2010 Vol. 16, No. 6

“WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN TO YOU?” SOME INTERESTING ANSWERS

A couple of years ago I remember visiting a poor family shortly before Christmas. The family consisted of a mother and four children. Her husband, only in his 30's, died suddenly while at work from an aneurysm. Their house was sparsely furnished. The furnace was broke so she was keeping the house warm by turning on the oven and placing a small fan in the kitchen doorway to blow that little heat into the rest of the house.

Seeing how little they had, and worse, having just lost her husband, I asked if she wanted to be “adopted” for Christmas so the kids could have presents. I always remember her answer. She said, “Thanks for the offer, but it’s okay. You know, I never saw Christmas as being about ‘stuff.’ It’s about celebrating the birth of Jesus with your family around a nice meal at the table.”

We decided to ask other people who recently have come to us for help, “What does Christmas mean to you?” Here are some of their answers:

An older lady said “Generosity.” She is a regular client of our food pantry. She takes care of three grandchildren and survives on \$648 per month from social security. She said that Christmas is a time when she is reminded that she needs to be generous to those in real need and that she really appreciates the generosity of all the people who help the poor in our city. She said that Jesus is all about generosity to those in need, and that she really wished she could help others rather than being on the receiving end of other people’s generosity.

A man who was in our Employment Services program said “Peace”. He was a veteran of the “Desert Storm” War and is currently homeless but is

trying hard to move forward. He said that when he was in Iraq, the Christmas season was the most peaceful, hopeful and quiet time of his duty. He said, “It would be great if ‘Christmas Peace’ could last more than a few days in December.”

A woman who came to the soup kitchen said, “Sadness.” She is currently homeless and lives on the street. She said that Christmas always makes her sad - she has three children but doesn’t know where they are or even if they are OK. Her words - “Christmas is like a magnifying glass that makes everything very sad for me.”

A man in his 60’s said, “Christmas is tough when you have no family. When you are old, alone and homeless it’s just another day of trying to survive.” He said his wife had died of cancer and of his two kids - one is in jail and the other is “gone.” He lost his job a year ago, lost his brother, lost his home, lost his wife and “lost his way.” He said he lives in his car and has no family left.

One young man who came to our soup kitchen said, “Hope”. He said that at Christmas he always thought of his family and that he had hope that they would someday “get together” again. He hadn’t seen anyone in his family for over ten years and Christmas always made him lonely - but also, oddly, hopeful.



STATE OF MISSOURI GIVES TAX CREDITS FOR DONATIONS TO FOOD PANTRIES

CREDITS UP TO 50% OF YOUR DONATION

As an incentive to encourage people to make donations to food pantries, the State of Missouri passed a bill three years ago that will give a tax credit – not just a deduction – for contributions to a food pantry, such as Bishop Sullivan Center’s.

Any taxpayer (individual, corporation or trust) that makes a donation of cash or food supplies to a food pantry may receive a credit of up to \$2,500 per taxpayer per year. The taxpayer may receive a credit of up to 50% of their donation.

For more information on this, go to <http://dor.mo.gov/tax/taxcredit/fpt.htm>. There is a link to this information on our website, www.bishopsullivan.org.



LOCAL BUSINESSES TO MATCH ON-LINE DONATIONS TO BISHOP SULLIVAN CENTER

YOUR DONATION WILL DOUBLE

Thanks to the generosity of some local businesses and individuals, any donation you make on our website will be matched – up to \$50,000 until December 31st. Straub Construction, Chamberlin Contracting, Reintjes Services, Inc. and Terry & Susie Reardon have collectively put up the match money.

Our website lets you decide where you want your contribution to go. If you click on *Feed the Hungry*, it will give several options on how you can help those who need food. You might want to sponsor a night at the soup kitchen, provide food for our pantry or cover the cost of delivering food to an elderly person. If you click on *Lift a Burden*, it will take you to a page where very specific needs are spelled out for individuals right here in our community. Read their brief stories and see if you want to help one out.

www.bishopsullivan.org

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You can make a general donation, [sponsor a night at the soup kitchen](#), or [lift a burden](#) for a specific family or help the elderly.

So, we hope you'll make a donation, watch the thermometer immediately rise, and help struggling families in our city this holiday season.

GOAL \$50,000

- \$45,000
- \$40,000
- \$35,000
- \$30,000
- \$25,000
- \$20,000
- \$15,000
- \$10,000
- \$5,000
- \$0

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To donate make check payable to Bishop Sullivan Center and mail to the address below or you can donate online.

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