

Bishop Sullivan Center

NEWS & REFLECTIONS

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VOLUNTEERS SEEK TO BE LAST CHRIST GIVES UNUSUAL FORMULA FOR GREATNESS

A homily by Fr. Paul Turner, Pastor of St. Munchins, Cameron, Missouri

A priest friend of mine from Africa was visiting. I wanted to show him a little more of life in the Midwest. We visited Mike Mathews, who directs St. James Place, Bishop Sullivan Center's other location on 39th and Troost. My friend asked, "What do they do here?" I said, "They help the poor."

At St. James Place, Mike told us, "We help people, but they have to help themselves. If they ask us to pay a utility bill this month, we first make them figure out how they are going to pay their utility bill next month. If they have no job, we do not find employment for them; we teach them how to look for a job. We also tell them how to dress for a job interview." Mike was wearing a dirty t-shirt as he was explaining all this to us. He said, "Our staff always points to me as a bad example. They say, 'When you go for an interview, don't dress like him.'"

We tend to measure success by the kind of job you have, the clothes you wear, the house you live in, or the car you drive. Jesus measured it differently. His path to success, he told the disciples, was through service, crucifixion and resurrection. His success involved giving, not getting.

The Twelve missed the point so badly that they started discussing who among them was the greatest. If they were typical young men, they were probably not saying, "Peter, I think you're the greatest;" "No, James, you're the greatest;" "No, I think John is definitely the greatest." Instead, they were probably saying, "I am the greatest;" "No way;" "No, me, I'm the greatest." And so on. For them, the path to success was self-promotion.

Jesus was having none of it. "If anyone wishes to be first, you shall be the last of all and the servant of all." Some people never get this. Serving others just does not fit into their world view. They have to be first; they have



Mike Mathews (in the blue t-shirt), who manages our sister center, St. James Place, and a group of faithful volunteers unload food that will be given out through our food pantry and soup kitchen. (From l to r: John Vohs, Ed Nixon, Steve Clements, Mike Mathews, Lee & Frank Roos, Marty Kostelac.)

to be best; they have to be greatest. They are driven by the desire to possess power, not to share it; to put other people down as a way of putting themselves up. You can quote Jesus all you want, "the last shall be first," and they just won't see it that way. Often, there's not much you can do for them.

What we can do for ourselves is to live the way Jesus expects. Serve the needs of others. Read to a child. Hire the college graduate. Give time to charities. Help your neighbor. Compliment the person who struggles to do better. Listen hard to someone who needs your ear. Let go of the need to be first, and embrace the desire to serve.



A FATHER'S CANCER HURTS HIM AND HIS FAMILY'S INCOME

FAMILY OF FOUR TRYING TO GET BY ON WIFE'S \$10.00 AN HOUR JOB

Rick and Maria and their two kids, ages ten and six, were doing just fine. Rick and Maria both worked. They bought a house two years ago and faithfully made their mortgage payments. Then they received a letter that the person to whom they were paying their mortgage had not been turning the money into the bank and so they were foreclosed on. They figured they lost \$30,000.

They are now renting a small house. In February Rick was laid off of his job and then two months later, the nagging pain in his hip turned out to be a cancerous tumor. After completing weeks of radiation his tumor was surgically removed. His prognosis is good, though he admits his recovery is painful. He grimaces as he walks with his cane.

His unemployment has run out. They are struggling to pay their bills on Maria's ten dollar an hour job. Fortunately, through her work she has health insurance for the family, though it costs her \$300 a month. Thanks to donations made to Bishop Sullivan Center we helped them with a utility bill and rent. As soon as the doctor clears him, Rick is eager to get back to work. Maria said, "We pray a lot these days."



Melissa Ball, staff person, listens to Rick's story. A tumor, recently removed from his hip, has caused him to painfully walk with a cane.

Bishop Sullivan Center presents "Whispers from the Streets"

A one hour play with a Dickens-like message for the holidays.

Written by Jeremy M. Lillig & Damian Torres-Botello



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2009

St. Joseph Medical Center
Community Center
1000 Carondelet Drive
(State Line and I-435)
6:00 pm

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2009

St. Pius X High School Theatre
1500 NE 42nd Ter (Davidson and I-29)
6:00 pm

Casual Attire

*Buffet dinner line opens at 6:15 pm
Play begins at 7:15 pm*

Reservation cost:

*Adults - \$25.00 • Students - \$15.00
Tables of eight - \$160.00*

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For tickets go to www.bishopsullivan.org • Or call (816) 231-0984