



# BECAUSE *we are* CATHOLIC

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MARYLAND SERVES AND ADVOCATES FOR THE POOR, VULNERABLE AND THOSE IN NEED NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE CATHOLIC, BUT BECAUSE WE ARE CATHOLIC.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE MARYLAND CATHOLIC CONFERENCE FEBRUARY 14, 2014

### **“For I was hungry and you gave me food.” (Mt. 25:35)**

“We’re giving food away, but what we’re really giving away is hope,” said a retired Maryland Park Police officer and parishioner at St. John Vianney Catholic Church in Prince Frederick. Gordon Norwood was quoted in a Catholic Standard article (Feb. 12, 2014) about the parish’s Interfaith Food Pantry - one of the largest church-run food pantries in Calvert County.

The food pantry partners with area butchers, bakeries, grocery stores and churches for food and financial donations. The pantry also sustains itself through an on-going virtual food drive program. This financial donation program allows the food pantry to purchase the products they need most at steep discounts. In most cases, the volunteers are able to buy over four times as much food as the regular donor can purchase at the grocery store.

Sixty-five volunteers work throughout the week gathering and picking up food, stocking shelves and packing bags for different sized families. Then, on Wednesday afternoons, they serve 100 - 115 clients with bags of food, hope and friendship. The volunteers greet the clients by name, chatting and joking with one another.

“It’s just like a family atmosphere. We want to make clients happy ... We want them to feel at home,” said Larry Donnelly in the article. Donnelly is the parish’s committee chair who leads the food pantry. He retired after 35 years of managing food services for students at the University of Maryland.

*“And it is important to be able to make people welcome; this is something even more beautiful than any kind of ornament or decoration. I say this because when we are generous in welcoming people and sharing something with them - some food, a place in our homes, our time - not only do we no longer remain poor: we are enriched.”*

**– Pope Francis, July 25, 2013**