



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 6, 2014

Baby It's Cold Outside

But approximately 60 homeless men and women in Anne Arundel County have a warm place to spend the night tonight.

Eleven Catholic parishes open their doors for a week at a time along with other religious organizations through the Winter Relief Program run by the Arundel House of Hope, a non-profit ecumenical organization that provides emergency, transitional, and permanent affordable housing for the poor and those experiencing homelessness in Anne Arundel County.

The Winter Relief Program, operating since 1992, runs from late October through April. Each week, a different organization serves as overnight shelter – and much more.

Two weeks ago, Our Lady of the Chesapeake Catholic Church in Pasadena took its turn and opened its doors, according to a story in The Catholic Review newspaper on January 30. Parishioners serve breakfast, lunch and dinner for a week with help from parish groups, school children and the Knights of Columbus. They give free haircuts, lend a sensitive ear, distribute clothing, offer fellowship and Mass. Young parishioners play board games with the men and women. The parishioners prepare nine months for this one week, primarily working to raise the \$22,000 the parish spends on meals, utilities and contributions to the House of Hope.

Father Brian Rafferty is quoted in the article as saying, "Some of these men have jobs to get to, but they can't make their way out of poverty. The one thing they crave is respect." And one gentleman said of his experience, "It's scary out there when you're by yourself. Being here is special."

Parishes participating in the Winter Relief Program:

- Church of the Crucifixion – Glen Burnie
- Good Shepherd – Glen Burnie
- Holy Family – Davidsonville
- Holy Trinity – Glen Burnie
- Our Lady of the Chesapeake – Pasadena
- Our Lady of the Fields – Millersville with St. Andrew by the Bay – Annapolis
- St. Bernadette – Severn
- St. Elizabeth Ann Seton – Crofton with St. Mary – Annapolis
- St. Joseph – Odenton

Poverty that is learned with the humble, the poor, the sick and all those who are on the existential peripheries of life. Theoretical poverty is of no use to us. Poverty is learned by touching the flesh of the poor Christ, in the humble, the poor, the sick, in children.

~ Pope Francis, May 8, 2013