

Almsgiving: an opportunity to serve

Here we go again putting God in a box or a bottle. Lent, as other liturgical seasons, is not a finite event each year, but a daily gift back to God. I don't know about you but I am wakened by God daily and believe as a Catholic Christian I am to be about his work daily. I am under the belief that we should practice the skills of Lent daily as we do Christmas and Easter. With that practice in mind we will be doing what Jesus asks of us. We are to pray, fast and give alms each and every day.

Over the past year I have been privileged to meet some of God's wonderful people and that has been everyone I encountered, with no exceptions. However there are some who are living examples of almsgiving. They demonstrate a deeper understanding that the needs of all are the responsibility of all of God's children with no exceptions.

God's people need the charity, the love, the almsgiving daily not just in special times of the year. Works of charity and promotion of justice are important elements of their way of life. They know that prayer, fasting, trust and focus on others are a key to the almsgiver. For example, I will describe one of the people whose almsgivings has been a blessing to many.

My friend came to me with an idea, which I call a blessing, and said "I want to do something to help others and I want to do it as a gift I have. I crotchet and I make hats. I want to make hats and give them to the homeless and I can ask others in the church if they want to help and we can form a group to make the hats."

I told her to pray on it and talk with her pastor. She followed through and what she has to offer has become "The Hands of Love Ministry," which has provided hats to many agencies over the past year. About 70 hats were given to homeless men, women and children at a dinner New Year's Day. To date they have made and distributed hundreds of hats in less than a year. My friend is planning to make more hats in the next year; it seems that once it started she cannot stop because the need is so great. She is not looking for fame or praise, because she is giving back what was given to her.

There are many who want to serve God, but may feel that what they have to offer

may not have any value. We are told by St. Paul that the body of Christ needs all the parts and that means you, too! We all have skills which can be used to build to bring the kingdom of God to all of his people, no exceptions. This Lent gives us the opportunity, with our creativity, God-given skills and faith, that we can change the world with our almsgiving. Additionally, once we start, we will be like my friend in that we cannot stop because the need is so great.

If you want additional information about the ministry or to donate, please e-mail me at barksdalejr@aol.com.

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