



St. Austin Catholic Parish 2018 Christmas Basket Project

Coordinated and made possible by our parish St. Vincent de Paul Society

What is the Christmas Basket Project?

The St. Austin Christmas Basket Project, an annual tradition in our parish, ministers to more than 180 households each year by providing food and gifts for Christmas. This parish-wide outreach to the community offers a variety of ways for each household to participate—shopping, organizing, map-making, sorting, wrapping, planning, or delivering. The Christmas Basket Project traditionally begins with each household's donation of food items at our Thanksgiving Mass, on **Wed. Nov. 21 at 6 p.m.**

Fill this bag with the items suggested below, and return them to the church during our Thanksgiving Mass or to the church office by **Thurs., Dec. 13**. Then check out the calendar below for important dates to remember. **The final date to return all gifts is Sun., Dec. 9.**

We also invite you to learn more about the poverty that forces so many to seek help. What are its root causes? What can you do to make a difference after the Christmas Basket project ends? Read the back of this sheet to learn more and take action.

Important Dates to Remember

November 10/11 & 18/19: Take a bag and fill it with the following types of foods and return to the church for Thanksgiving Eve Mass, on **Wed., Nov. 21** at 6 p.m. or to the **church office by Thurs., Dec. 13:**

- **Canned vegetables: beans, peas, carrots, corn, mixed vegetables**
- **Canned fruits: pears, peaches, pineapple, mixed fruit**
- **Bags or boxes of stuffing & rice**
- **Bags of nuts, popcorn & candy**
- **High protein foods such as canned tuna or salmon, peanut butter, canned meats and dried milk**

Please do not include perishable fruits or vegetables.

\$10 HEB gift cards for purchasing turkeys are also appreciated.

Thanksgiving Mass, Wed., Nov. 21 at 6 p.m.: Return your bags filled with food items to church during Mass.

Sat., Dec. 1 & Sun., Dec. 2: Attend the **St. Austin Holiday Fair** and pick a name from the Ron Gibson Memorial Giving Tree. Once you have a name, go out and play "elf" by choosing a gift (value \$30-40) for this person.

Thurs., Dec. 13: Final Date for returning non-perishable food, stocking stuffers and \$10 HEB cards.

Thurs., Dec. 13: Assembly Night starting at 5 p.m. in Hecker Hall. It's an evening of sorting food, wrapping gifts and assembling "baskets" for delivery.

December 14: Final Date for dropping off homemade baked breads for baskets .

December 15: Delivery Day begins at 8:30 a.m. in the back alley. Pull into the alley, load up your car, pick up a map, and you're on your way!

**For more information or to offer help,
adopt an entire family, or make a donation,
contact our Project Coordinators:
Huddie Murray, Jennifer Korba and Lisa Carruth
at XmasBasket@gmail.com.**



Why do 180 households need the Christmas Basket Project?

The 180 households we minister to each year through our Christmas Basket Project live at or below the poverty level. What causes poverty? Experts in social policy cite numerous factors that contribute to poverty:

- **LOW WAGES & LACK OF BENEFITS & UNEMPLOYMENT:** In 2011, 37% of Texas workers did not earn enough to meet basic needs for the Austin area. In 2014, 17.2% of people in Texas had incomes below the poverty line, about \$24,000/year for a family of 4. Employment opportunities for low-income households are frequently limited to jobs that pay low wages and have few, if any, benefits. (Sources: Center for Public Policy Priorities, 2013 and Center for American Progress)
- **VERY YOUNG OR VERY OLD AGE:** Children, especially the very young, are completely dependent on others to meet their basic needs. Likewise, the elderly may suffer from illness, physical disability or mental impairment that puts them at risk of increased dependency.
- **MENTAL ILLNESS:** Mental illness includes a vast number of functional and non-functional conditions. Having an untreated or severe mental health condition can prohibit people from living successfully in their communities.
- **DISABILITY:** People with disabilities have a variety of physical and learning challenges. Those with lifestyle limitations due to a disability often have low incomes and require accommodations that can be expensive. They are also at risk of isolation due to social stigma.
- **SOCIAL EXCLUSION:** Exclusion happens when people are not part of ordinary life networks. The homeless, ex-prisoners, people with AIDS, people with disabilities and those who do not speak English well often suffer from social exclusion. These people may be deprived of resources, lack social protection and/or have to fight social stigma. *Source: Basic Needs Coalition*

TO LEARN MORE VISIT:

Poverty USA, www.povertyusa.org
Center for Public Policy Priorities, www.cppp.org
National Center for Children in Poverty, www.nccp.org
National Alliance on Mental Illness Austin, www.namiaustin.org

How can YOU make a difference?

Volunteer with or donate to St. Austin's St. Vincent de Paul Society and/or Outreach to Persons in Need. They provide much needed services to people living in poverty such as clothing, rent, and utility assistance. To learn more, contact **Pat Macy** at **512-477-9471 ext. 324** or pmacy@staustin.org or go to our parish website at www.staustin.org and click on Social Justice Ministries.

Support public policy initiatives that create real solutions for adequate healthcare, childcare, living wages, education and disability assistance. Visit the Poverty USA website (www.povertyusa.org) or the Texas Catholic Conference website (www.txcatholic.org) for information on how to advocate for change.

