

PASTOR'S COLUMN

Did you know these things about our Parish?

In Matthew Chapter 25, Jesus gives a profound teaching about who gets to heaven: “For I was hungry and you gave me food, thirsty and you gave me drink, naked and you clothed me, sick or in prison and you visited me.” Our generosity in works of mercy is the gauge for eternal life.

Deacon Ed’s Food Bank. The first Thursday morning I visited the Parish, I was greeted with the sight of some very poor people sitting in our Parish Center reception area. They came looking for food. Fortunately, we were able to help them. We have a strong ministry to the hungry and poor here in St. Francis Parish. Deacon Ed’s Food Bank (named for its founder, Deacon Ed Coudrain) has 8-10 volunteers and give out bags of food to the needy people every Thursday morning in the Parish Center. The average distribution is 25 bags of food per week. The food includes fresh-baked bread from St. Joseph Abbey, canned and boxed goods, fresh fruit and potatoes when available, and toiletry items as needed. The food given out is donated by parishioners or purchased with funds donated by parishioners several times a year.

Deacon Ed’s Helping Hand Ministry assists the poor with funds for other expenses if the need is justified and the bank account permits. Beginning the weekend of September 29-30, the Food Bank will have brown bags available in Church with a list of food items most needed for this ministry (e.g. cereal, canned vegetables, canned meats, canned fruit, pasta, macaroni, rice, peanut butter and jelly, and soups). You are invited to take home a bag, fill it up with needed items and return it to the church vestibule for collection and distribution by our volunteers.

St. Vincent de Paul Ministry. In addition to our “Deacon Ed” Ministries, we have an active St. Vincent de Paul Ministry for the needy and working poor. Calls come into the Parish Office during the week from people seeking financial help with medicine, rent and utilities. Volunteers evaluate the need, and distribute funds as the need dictates and the checkbook allows. The primary source of funds for this ministry is donations from parishioners several times a year.

Friends of the Poor Walk/Run. There will be a “Friends of the Poor Walk/Run Fundraiser” at City Park next Saturday, September 29 at 9:00 A.M. with pre-walk registration at 8:00 A.M. and a post-walk party (this is New Orleans, after all!) from 10:00 A.M.-1:00 P.M. All proceeds go to the St. Vincent de Paul Conferences in our area. You can also register online at www.fopwalk.org or call (504) 382-2721.

Finally, although our Food Bank has adequate volunteers at this time, our St. Vincent de Paul ministry can use help. If you want to get involved, give our office a call. Thanks for your generosity in helping us to take seriously the call of Jesus to care for the hungry, poor and needy in our midst.

God bless,

Fr. Joe