



CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Diocese of Wilmington

For 180 years - A legacy of caring service

CATHOLIC CHARITIES 180TH ANNIVERSARY

BASIC NEEDS PROGRAM PRAYER SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

Leader

As the issues of poverty and civil rights drew the nation's attention in the 1960's and 1970's, Catholic Charities [then known as Catholic Social Services] extended its reach to care for the victims of poverty and social injustice. The agency's emphasis on stabilizing the family remained at the forefront of Catholic Charities outreach to the most vulnerable in our communities - the poor and dependent. Catholic Charities continues to lend a hand to deal with not only the immediate crisis but also to help prevent future emergencies through its Basic Needs Program.

Good and gracious God, we live in trying times. Prices are increasing, employment is less secure, and many are losing jobs. More are living from paycheck to paycheck, and many others have no steady source of income. The need for food, clothing, electricity, heat, housing assistance and the other basic necessities of life is increasing at an alarming rate.

Loving God, meet us in the insecurity of these times and hear our prayer; be a tower of strength amidst the shifting sands of these times, and a light in the darkness; help us receive your gift of peace, and fix our hearts where true joys are to be found, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Reader 1

Catholic Charities' mission is rooted in the social doctrine of the Church and is aimed at addressing human suffering and restoring the well-being of individuals. Its ministry of providing basic needs services is an example of charity to the least of our sisters and brothers.

Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical *Caritas In Veritate* (Charity in Truth) states:

"Charity is at the heart of the Church's social doctrine. Every responsibility and every commitment spelt out by that doctrine is derived from charity, which, according to the teaching of Jesus, is the synthesis of the entire Law. It gives real substance to the personal relationship with God and with neighbour; it is the principle not only of micro-relationships (with friends, with family members or within small groups) but also of macro-relationships (social, economic and political ones). For the Church, instructed by the Gospel, charity is everything because, as St. John teaches and as I recalled in my first Encyclical letter, "God is Love": everything has its origin in God's love, everything is shaped by it, everything is directed towards it. Love is God's greatest gift to humanity; it is his promise and our hope."

(continued)

Reader 2

As we pray for those who seek our help, let us respond, Lord, help us to see You in the face of our clients.

Reader 2: That our service to others be true prayer, and not merely a transaction, let us pray,

All: Lord, help us to see You in the face of our clients.

Reader 2: That our service to others reflects true love, and not be an impersonal encounter, let us pray,

All: Lord, help us to see You in the face of our clients.

Reader 2: That our service to others gives witness to God, and not be self-serving, let us pray,

All: Lord, help us to see You in the face of our clients.

Reader 2: That the totality of our service may begin to reflect the totality of God's outpoured love to us, let us pray,

All: Lord, help us to see You in the face of our clients.

Reader 3

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the most important commandment. The second most important commandment is like it: Love your neighbour as you love yourself. The whole Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets depend on these two commandments." The Word of the Lord.

Leader: Together, let us pray a Prayer for Charity in Truth:

All:

Father, your truth is made known in your Word.

Guide us to seek the truth of the human person.

Teach us the way to love because you are Love.

Jesus, you embody Love and Truth.

Help us to recognize your face in the poor.

Enable us to live out our vocation to bring love and justice to your people.

Holy Spirit, you inspire us to transform our world.

Empower us to seek the common good for all persons.

Give us a spirit of solidarity and make us one human family.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.