



CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Diocese of Wilmington

For 180 years - A legacy of caring service

CATHOLIC CHARITIES 180TH ANNIVERSARY

THRIFT CENTER PRAYER SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

Leader 1: During the depths of the Great Depression, the Diocese of Wilmington struggled to assist the needy of all ages. In 1931, Bishop Edmond J. FitzMaurice created the diocese's first Charities Department, which evolved into the Catholic Welfare Guild, Catholic Social Services, and is now known as Catholic Charities. The Guild's first efforts included organizing chapters of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in the parishes and assisting pastors who did not have the resources to help all the families in their parishes who sought aid. The Guild also acquired fabric from the Red Cross, which parish volunteers would sew into clothing for needy families. From those efforts, the first Catholic Welfare Guild Thrift Store opened in Wilmington in 1937. Today, Catholic Charities operates Thrift Centers in Wilmington and Princess Anne to help those who need to stretch limited budgets to provide household necessities.

Leader 2: We are all familiar with the scripture verse from Matthew 25: "I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink...I was naked and you clothed me..."

The people who come to the Catholic Charities Thrift Centers in Wilmington and in Princess Anne are in need of the basic necessities such as clothing for their family and household goods for their home.

Let us take a moment and reflect on what it means to live in poverty:

Reader 1: Poverty is not having a coat to keep warm in the winter.

Reader 2: Poverty is not having pots and pans to cook with.

Reader 3: Poverty is not having clothes that fit.

Reader 4: Poverty is sleeping on the floor because you have no bed.

Reader 5: Poverty is not being able to go to school because you have no shoes.

Reader 6: Poverty is becoming sick because your food spoils from lack of refrigeration.

Reader 7: Poverty is keeping your belongings in a cardboard box because you have no furniture.

Reader 8: Poverty is powerlessness and a lack of freedom.

Leader 2: As we consider the mission of Catholic Charities and remember our 180 years of caring service to the most vulnerable, let us pray for those in our communities who face the many consequences of being poor:

All: Good and gracious God, we lift up to You the poor and the marginalized.

We know that these are Your cherished ones; that You are a God whose heart cries out for justice; that You are a God who longs to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. We ask simply, Lord, that You give us Your heart.

Fill us, Lord, with Your compassion; give us Your eyes to see; give us boldness, selflessness, and wisdom, so that we too might help those in need.

Lord, You know every one of us, and especially the poor. Every overwhelming statistic, You know personally, one by one. These are Your children. Let us be tireless in doing what is good and what is right unto the least of these. Put the spirit of thankfulness and gratitude into our hearts for those who donate their goods and give of their time. These, too, help us to serve our most vulnerable sisters and brothers in need.

AMEN