

BREAKING BREAD at Emmaus

December 2009

"Christmas is our feast. The time we remember Jesus, born homeless in a shelter in Bethlehem. The time of hope, of the birth of hope...the time we try once again to open our hearts, our lives and let God be born in us. It's interesting that the Gospels begin with the Christmas story, the birth of Jesus, the power of God in a powerless little child, and end the story with Emmaus (Luke 24): Jesus on the road, incognito, a stranger among his disciples."

It was with these words from Fr. David Kirk that we began our Christmas letter to you last year. We felt it fitting to revisit them as Emmaus House re-opens its doors after a summer of having been closed - inspired by how the realities of homelessness can bring us closer to each other and to God.

Luke 24 says that it was the breaking of bread that allowed the disciples' eyes to open and to recognize Christ as the stranger amongst them. And so we also, when we break bread for each other, can open ourselves to the heart of the Gospel to love God and to love each other. Christ fed his disciples and He continues to feed us because He is our true food. He lives in us because His nourishment reminds us that we are spiritual creatures.



Let us not be strangers to each other. Let us imitate Him and feed each other. Let us open our hearts to each other in this opportune season of rebirth

Set Christ free, free from hunger, free from need, free from prison, free from injustice.

- St. John Chrysostom

Dear Friends,

Emmaus House closed its doors late June because we were seriously out of funds and did not have a full time live in director to guide residential life. After a summer of much soul searching, The Board of Directors decided to continue the ministry with our new focus on - outreach to the poor, building a strong volunteer base, creating a grass roots donor base, and forging alliances with similar ministries.

We began the outreach work by resuming our weekly "Traveling Soup Run." On the evening of October 29th our white van left the house with four volunteers and 150 cups of hot home-made chicken soup to serve the homeless at four sites in the city. The excitement felt between the servers and receivers for this reunion was palpable. As Maria Gomez handed out her hearty soup from the back of the van, Fr. Martin Kraus and John Herbert, a parishioner from his church in East Meadow, were fielding questions, praying and distributing warm clothing on the sidewalk. These Thursday night soup runs are a wonderful way to experience Emmaus House hospitality.

Over the summer, Fr. Martin created a bond with another ministry that serves the poor in Long Island called "Harvest for the World" run by a dynamic couple, Joanne and Rich Richards. Dwayne, a current Harvest resident, went on our second soup run. We are thrilled about being in alliance with this group.

Also this summer, I met with Brian Johannsen and James Winams from the "Bowery Mission" in the city, another Christian agency serving the homeless with the possibilities of more alliance building. This agency recently hired Darryl Wood, former resident and graduate of Emmaus House, as an operational manager. This kind of success story is at the heart of what Fr. David's blood, sweat and tears were all about.

On November 21, Michael Stallings, our bookkeeper and former resident of Emmaus House, and John Herbert helped pass out 50 "Boxes of Love" to local Harlem residents, a way for us to extend a Thanksgiving meal to people in the neighborhood.

Also, I want to thank those residents who helped keep Emmaus House running after Fr. David passed. On a weekly basis for two years, they provided this same kind of outreach to the Harlem community showing that as formerly homeless people themselves they had not forgotten those still needing help. And a special thanks to David Richardson for his administration support during these years.

I want to thank the volunteers who have been computerizing our donation list and sending out thank you receipt letters to our supporters. And Margaret Nunez, former worker at the house, for getting our Quikbook work up to date and Michael Stallings for his steady help in the office all summer. And my husband Albert who is with us in spirit and who gives wonderful advice. These are the folks who have fed hope into the dream of having Emmaus House continue.

Lastly, we want to thank the anonymous donor who gifted us with a new commercial dryer this month and to all you folks to continue to send in your donations. Please keep us in your prayers and stay with us as we grow together in this ministry.

With love in Christ,
Julia Demaree-Raboteau,
Assistant Director

Kirk Barrell,
Director

Julia

Kirk

"Writing is an act of community. It is a letter, it is comforting, consoling, helping, advising on our part as well as asking it on yours. It is part of our human association with each other. It is an expression of our love and concern for each other."

-Dorothy Day,
The Catholic Worker,
October 1950



Letters

Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you for your generous note of 13 November, which I received today. Your letter acknowledged prior donation of financial support from me.

By standing among and with the poor, Emmaus House continues to witness to Christ who manifests a bountiful harvest of Himself when we share our broken bread with one another.

May we continue our journey toward the Holy Nativity in confidence that Christ remains among us.

Joannis Edward M. Freeman

WISH LIST

A dozen folding chairs, a lightweight folding table, carpentry tools, dumpster rental, lamps, plastic bins, vinyl mattress covers, metal back door with screen, metal racks for food pantry.

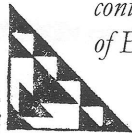


We received the following blessing from a donor this month in a little card titled, "A Prayer of Thanksgiving for Emmaus House" – the first a quote from St.Theophan the Recluse and the second the contributor's own heartfelt prayer for the house:



"And here is a sign for you, by which you can be certain that this glorious work has begun with you: you will experience a certain feeling of warmth towards the Lord. If you fulfill everything prescribed, then this feeling will soon begin to appear more and more often, and in time will become continuous. This feeling is sweet and beatific, and from its first appearance it stimulates us to desire and seek it, lest it leave the heart: for in it is Paradise."

O Christ, our Lord and Savior, may a feeling of warmth toward You become continuous until that day You ordain, that with all who share in the ministry of Emmaus House, when we may share You in Paradise. Amen.



REBUILDING EMMAUS HOUSE

When Patriarch Maximos ordained Fr. David in 1963, he said, "You are ordained for the Church of God,"...and then he added, "for the poor, and for the unity of Christians." These words laid the cornerstone for his lifelong ministry of working side by side with the poor in Harlem, whom he served for forty-five years. His legacy is known as Emmaus House; it was his hope that his work would continue to live on and develop after his death and that others would be inspired to take on this kind of ministry.

In his interview for the publication "Road to Emmaus" the day before he died, he said, "What I always wanted was a core of deeply religious and committed people, committed to the poor, committed to God, committed to community life...You have to totally put your life into God's hands. Saint Isaac of Nineveh, who has a very clear view of how to live with the poor, says that to really be of help, your own lifestyle can't be too distant from theirs. It has to be in solidarity with them."

Emmaus House today is rebuilding its operation taking small steps. We want to continue with a consistent, prayerful outreach to the poor. We want to increase a dedicated volunteer base. We want to build a network of affiliated agencies. We want to expand our broad base of individual donors. We want to revitalize our small intentional Christian community living and praying in the house and serving the poor. We want to fill our Chapel of Christ, the Homeless with regular prayer services.

We invite you all in to be part of this family ministry. Call us, visit us, pray with us, care with us,

serve with us. Join us in making Emmaus House a way of life. In serving the poor, we are also served, enabling us to find our spiritual commonality.

*May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us;
establish the work of our hands for us –
yes, establish the work of our hands. Psalm 90*

BECOME A VOLUNTEER

We welcome volunteers who believe that supporting others can make a difference in all of our lives and that hope and joy can go hand-in-hand with any difficult situation.

These are the areas with which we need help with right now –

- * CLOTHING PANTRY
- * CITI HARVEST PANTRY
- * TRAVELING SOUP RUN
- * FOOD DONATIONS
- * FELLOWSHIP MEALS
- * HOUSE CLEANING
- * HOUSE REPAIRS
- * EMMAUS MAILINGS

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, call us at 212-749-9404 and leave a message for Julia or Father Martin. You can also reach him at 516-234-0463. If you can't be with us in person, please pray for us.

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It takes an extended family committed to fight poverty – donors, residents, volunteers, affiliates, networkers, churches .if you are not here, please let us know so we can include you next time.

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