

## 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Last week I spoke with one of our guests at the Morning Glory Ministries breakfast. It was a cold morning, so I made a remark about the temperature. He said, "Imagine what it's like sleeping outside in this weather." I said, "I can't imagine what that's like." I asked him, "Where do you sleep?" He told me about an area a little south of here with a slight embankment that made it more comfortable for sleeping, and where he could hang up some cloths to break the force of cold winds. I asked, "Does anybody hassle you over there?" He said, "No. I came recently to Kansas City, and people are much more accepting here than where I was before." I said, "Last month another guy here told me that there are plenty of places like ours where people can eat for free, so if you're homeless and hungry in Kansas City, it's your own fault." This guy agreed.

Pope Francis has established today as the World Day of Prayer for the Poor. In this year's message, he compares poor people to blind Bartimaeus, "sitting on the roadside and looking for meaning in their lives! How many of them wonder why they have fallen so far and how they can escape! They are waiting for someone to come up to them and say: 'Take heart; rise, [Jesus] is calling you.'"

Many of you support Morning Glory Ministries with your donations or your hands. You contribute funds so that we can buy food and provide emergency assistance. You give your time here to prepare a meal, serve a meal, and clean up after a meal. You are providing hope for someone on the roadside who might otherwise feel abandoned.

Included among those who feel abandoned are victims of sexual abuse by clergy in the Catholic Church. Many of those hoping for progress from the meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore last week surely felt disappointed at the news that a vote on new directives came to a halt when the Vatican intervened, asking the bishops to wait until February when Pope Francis has called a special meeting of the chairs of episcopal conferences around the world to discuss the crisis. The bishops of Missouri, including Bishop Johnston, then issued their own statement affirming their loyalty and unity with the pope, but supporting the three steps proposed before this week's meeting: establishment of a third-party hot-line for complaints of sexual abuse by a bishop; development of policies to impose restrictions on bishops who have been removed or resigned for allegations of sexual abuse of a minor or sexual misconduct with an adult; and support for a full investigation into the Archbishop McCarrick scandal, utilizing lay experts in relevant fields. The Missouri bishops concluded their statement, "We bishops need to publicly renew our commitment to utilizing the charisms of the laity in our exercise of pastoral governance as bishops. We cannot solve this crisis on our own. We need the laity to help us."

Plenty of people feel abandoned - including the poor and victims of abuse. Today's readings proclaim the faithfulness of Christ, who will return as our judge. They address those who lose hope. Psalm 16 has us praying confidently, "You will not abandon my soul to hell, nor let your holy one see corruption." The psalm refers to the corruption of the body after death, but we also need rescue from forms of corruption in life. The resolution of our problems has not yet come, but God will not abandon those who cry out from the roadside in times of need.

Sunday, November 18, 2018