

## 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Cathedral Parish received news this week that the plaintiffs who took the diocese to court over our meal service to the needy downtown have dismissed the claims. When we moved Morning Glory Ministries' daily breakfast from 11th and Broadway to 9th and Baltimore last year, a local group made claims of common law nuisance and statutory nuisance causing damage to their businesses. They also sought a preliminary injunction requiring us immediately to cease operating our faith-based breakfast program—before the trial, set for February 2025.

Three weeks ago Judge Kevin D. Harrell denied the preliminary injunction because the plaintiffs were unable to prove that we caused nuisance or that businesses would suffer irreparable harm without an injunction. The judge wrote, "Defendants' use of their property in downtown Kansas City to practice their religious beliefs is not unreasonable. There is nothing inappropriate about serving food in this neighborhood as a way to serve the poor or unhoused." Continuing with a trial in February seems unlikely to change this judgment; the plaintiffs have ended the case.

I'm sensitive to downtown employees who want to work in a safe environment. I believe Morning Glory Ministries helps provide that. Throughout this time of litigation, part of my daily prayer has asked the intercession of the patroness of this cathedral, Mary, the Immaculate Conception. Our diocesan legal team received *pro bono* assistance from the law firm Shook, Hardy & Bacon. We're grateful for their assistance. They helped us so we could help others.

Some people don't get the immediate help they need: a woman stuck in an abusive relationship, a qualified worker without a job, a sick person who cannot afford both medicine and food, parents striving to help a dangerously wayward kid. All these people need timely help like we got, but they don't always get it.

Today's passage from the Letter to the Hebrews takes a title from the Book of Exodus, "high priest," and applies it to Jesus. People respected the high priest for his solemn ministry. The one in the Book of Exodus probably seemed out of touch with everyday concerns. But according to the Letter to the Hebrews, Jesus was not like that: "we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin." Jesus understands the need for help. He has practical, human experience.

Whereas people who knew the high priests of old may have feared them, the Letter to the Hebrews says, "let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy." We approach God in our prayer not out of fear but with confidence that God will understand. Hebrews says we receive mercy, and we will also "find grace for timely help." We will get the aid we need, and it will come when we need it.

In times of strife, we call upon God in prayer. We also remember God knows what is best—just as a good parent provides what is best for a child even if it is not exactly what the child wants. This week the cathedral got what we prayed for. Those who still await an answer to their prayers take confidence that Christ the high priest understands, and he will provide mercy and grace.