# 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

**The tragedy at Annunciation Parish in Minneapolis this week breaks the hearts of all people of goodwill. When a shooter fired 116 rounds through the stained glass windows of a church killing two children and injuring many more during the celebration of Mass, the attacker also violated the very principles on which Catholic schools are built. The church aims to help those who are troubled, not to foster hatred.**

**Each of us can check how we feel about people who are struggling. If we give something to the poor, for example, we won't get much back. They won't return equal merchandise or service. They may not even show appreciation for a gift. We may become resentful—"Why should I give my hard-earned money to someone who isn't even working? The least they could do is get a job"—as if they haven't tried getting a job, or they had one and got let go, or they don't have a car and bus service doesn't go there, or their physical condition dissuades an employer from their application, or their criminal record makes the hill harder to climb. It ain't easy being poor.**

**Jesus' words challenge this economic model: "When you hold a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your wealthy neighbors, in case they may invite you back and you have repayment. Rather, when you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you."**

**To underscore this point, the lectionary assigns a responsorial psalm describing how God handles such an economy. We sang, "God, in your goodness, you have made a home for the poor." For sure, the poor are not paying him rent. Our cantor sang verses from Psalm 68, which tell something personal about our God of power and might: He holds the poor close to his heart. "Father of orphans, defender of widows: such is God in his holy place. God gives the desolate a home to dwell in; he leads the prisoners forth into prosperity.… In your goodness, O God, you provided for the poor."**

**We have all received generosity. You probably have strong memories of people who gave you opportunities you could not have seized on your own: parents who provided for you, a mentor who encouraged you, teachers who saw something in you, friends who believed in you. You probably received some gifts you could never repay. They formed you into the person you are.**

**America is a blessed and prosperous land, but we tend to idolize violence and neglect proper care for the poor, the immigrant, the infirm, and the sick. We can gain a lot from those who live on the margins: inspiration for how they persevered amid affliction, sustained their trust in God when hope seemed dim, or squeaked out a life on a minimum of resources. A lot of us, though, succumb to the prejudice that the poor are at fault for their own condition, and that giving brings insufficient investment. Generosity may not return material rewards, but students in Catholic schools and adults who guide them learn that giving builds a better society and keeps us alert to blessings our inner accountant may overlook. In his goodness, God has made a home for the poor. Jesus invites us all to do the same.**