



THE OPEN DOOR

FROM THE CORE COMMUNITY OF ANDRE HOUSE

SPRING 2016



In This Issue:

*A letter from our Executive Director, Fr. Tom Doyle.
Reflections by Fr. Chris, Megan, Alexis, Jessica and
Ellen with a focus on the
Year of Mercy and Transformation.*

A Letter from our Executive Director

Fr. Tom Doyle, C.S.C.



Growing up in a farming town, wounds were part of the normal landscape. Bike crashes, falling out of trees, slices on the bottom of my foot from walking barefoot in the creek, burns from the campfire, were typical occurrences. When it came to digging gravel out of an elbow or knee, I was judicious to whom I would expose an open wound. Mom was my preferred nurse because whether it was a physical abrasion or an emotional gash, she emotionally honored my pain and irrigated and dressed the laceration with tenderness. Mom knew how to create a safe haven when I was in pain.

Our guests at Andre House have lives that are plagued by physical and emotional wounds. We do our best to clean and dress their cuts. And even more so our staff and volunteers are mindful about creating a tender place to expose their emotional and spiritual pain. Our asphalt parking lot and converted warehouse building is holy ground where exposed wounds are tended with grace and compassion.

As I have asked our staff, volunteers, board members and guests how Andre House can better create a safe and healing environment where wounds can be tended, I have received a consistent request. What would it take to get air conditioning for Andre House?

For twenty years we have lived in solidarity with our guests by not having air conditioning in our kitchen, dining room and service areas. While we have been able to provide shade for our guests, the heat inside our walls during the hot season is essentially the same temperature that our guests experience outside. When we light our burners and ovens in the kitchen, the temperature quickly climbs to more than 100 degrees in the summer. Ice water and ice tea in the dining room provides some relief, but the sweat drips off the brows of the 200 bodies in our dining room as well as from our volunteers. The same areas are not heated, which makes for a chilly dining room in the winter.

This Spring, Andre House is going to install heat and air-conditioning to create an environment to better serve the guests who battle the heat and sun during the days and night. Could you please consider helping us to create a more hospitable environment to welcome guests and salve their wounds?

The total project cost for heating and air-conditioning is \$125,000. We have two wonderful contractors who have designed the project and are contributing a significant portion of the parts and labor. We have a wonderful couple who has provided the encouragement and initial funding to begin the project. We have another friend of Andre House who has promised to match every dollar donated to this project with a dollar of her own. We hope to have the project completed before the worst of this summer's heat.

For most of us, our families have been the ones who have created safe havens when we were in pain. The men and women who come to us, tragically, are not able to fall back on their families. Please help Andre House provide a better climate and safe haven for our brothers and sisters who are wounded and are in need of both human and divine healing.

Sincerely,

Fr. Tom

Easter Eggs

A reflection by Megan McCormick



Every Easter Sunday, when my brother and I were young, we would go hunting for Easter eggs in the small condominium my family rented on Sanibel, an island off the coast of Southwest Florida. Every Easter Sunday, the Easter Bunny would leave a trail of chocolates for me and my

brother to consume en route to these pink wicker baskets stuffed to the brim with bright green strands of artificial grass. The baskets were always waiting for us in the center of the room. My brother and I would use these plastic baskets to collect all the multi-colored eggs that had been scattered around the condominium. With the sun and surf beyond, and my two parents watching over us, eagerly yet patiently waiting for us to complete our task, opening the Easter eggs was always a joy-filled occasion for us kids. Whether the hollow plastic eggs held a dozen sour jelly beans, a couple Robin's Eggs, or even a handful of brightly-colored M&Ms— it was always exciting. It was always a surprise, whatever lay inside. And, by the end, our baskets were always full.

For most people, life is relatively straightforward, like a trail of chocolates left out on Easter Sunday. We go to school, we go to college. We get a job. Maybe we find a nice apartment to live in with friends. Life is like stepping into a series of miniature gifts we are to take and accept with gratitude in the moment, while simultaneously realizing that it is our craving, our striving for more that leads us to bigger and better gifts down the road. We find a partner. We get settled into a rewarding career. We raise a big family. In a way, we never grow up, as we are always on the hunt for more Easter eggs, more surprises. For us, even as adults, the journey never ends. There is always hope. There is always excitement. There are always more Easter eggs to be found, and we remain confident that our baskets will never run dry. After all, if you count the artificial grass ... our baskets were never empty to begin with.



“With eyes of faith consider the greatness of your mission and the wonderful amount of good which you can accomplish.”

Blessed Basil Moreau

But, what about those whose homes the Easter Bunny doesn't ever visit? What about those children who, for whatever reason, didn't get the trail of chocolates laid out before them, with their two loving parents standing there, watching them, waiting for them at the end of the trail? The truth is, there are broken homes, broken families, and broken systems in which not every child gets the privilege of waking up Easter morning to a showering of chocolates, to a sugary display of love and affection by the parents who care for them and want to see them happy. Still more, not every child gets the privilege of searching for eggs at all, as their parents do not have the material means for their children to seek after what it is they most desire, like a high school or college education. Still other children don't even get a basket. They have no support network. Perhaps they are undocumented migrants who crossed the border in isolation. Truly, they are the ones who are most alone in this world.

Sometimes, I think of Andre House as a shelter for those who never got to go Easter-egg hunting as children. Some of our guests see no clear path or purpose in their lives because, when they were children, no path or purpose was laid out for them to pursue. The guests at Andre House are the forgotten ones, the individuals society has, for whatever reason, left behind. But, these individuals *do* have a path. These individuals have a unique and purposeful destiny. Perhaps, we should remind them ...

As in the spirit of Easter Sunday, I like to think that God has placed us, to place blessings for them, to receive along the way.

A Place of Refuge

A reflection by Alexis Wadas



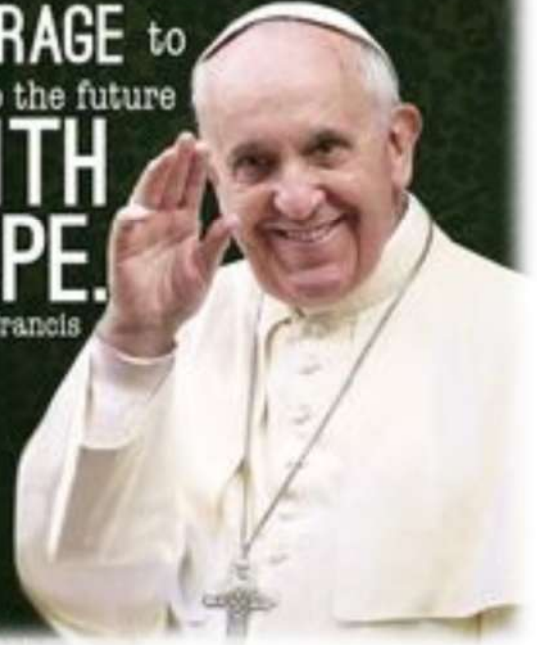
"I knew I just had to get there." She states this as we are driving in silence. I can hear her breathing heavy. She is gripping the gray hospital bucket tightly and we are both hoping she can make it through the

drive without throwing up. I ask her what she means by, "I knew I just had to get there." She then explains to me, "I knew I just had to get to Andre House. Someone there would take care of me. Then I'd be okay." I held my breath for a second. Nancy had such faith in Andre House.

Out the door we go, shouting and clapping. "Happy birthday, Ephram!" we sing, grins plastered on our faces, cake and a gift from the basement in hand. "I came here today to see the people who care about me," he says. Wow, who are we to be the most important people to someone we hardly know on their birthday?

Stories like this make me smile (and there are many, many more of them). They mean to me that we are succeeding. We are succeeding at not just being a meal, but being a house of hospitality, a place of refuge. We learn in the Bible that God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1). Sometimes I think about what we would need to do to be someone's refuge. To be God's hands and feet by being a very present help in times of trouble. And then I remember my encounters with people like Nancy and Ephram and I realize that we are a place of refuge for many and we are doing our best to be Christ like. I pray that during the Easter season and this year of mercy, God would grant us wisdom and discernment for how we can best serve our guests and be a place of refuge for them. I pray we can always offer them forgiveness and another chance, just as the Lord did for us.

MERCY is the force that
REAWAKENS US to new life
 and instills in us the
COURAGE to
 look to the future
WITH
HOPE.
 -Pope Francis



Mercy is "the beating heart of the Gospel"

Pope Francis writes: "It is absolutely essential for the Church and for the credibility of her message that she herself live and testify to mercy." Mercy, he says, is "the beating heart of the Gospel" (Misericordiae Vultus). To live mercy, we must rediscover both the spiritual works of mercy (counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offences, bear patiently those who do us ill, and pray for the living and the dead), and the corporal works of mercy (feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, heal the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead).

Which spiritual works of mercy might Christ be calling you to practice? Which corporal works of mercy?

<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/new-evangelization/jubilee-of-mercy/upload/year-of-mercy-handout.pdf>

A reflection by Jessica Luebbering



The archangel Gabriel came to me recently in the form of a 50-something-year-old black man. He proclaimed Christ's presence here at Andre House in the form of a 40-something-year-old white woman named Sandra. She wore mismatched shoes and carried a demeanor of desperation. Her feet hurt so badly, she told me, and were very swollen. The

mismatched shoes were problematic but it was her desperation that most concerned me.

Like Mary, I was given the opportunity to say either yes or no to Christ's presence in the person before me.

Like Mary, I was also given the opportunity to bear the light of Christ to a woman in the darkness of despair.

I am asked every day to make exceptions on someone's behalf. Sometimes I say "yes" right away, but many times the answer is "no," or, to the guest before me, might sound like "no." Sometimes, I ask guests to return during one of our clothing closet hours - "yes, but not right now." Sometimes, I ask them to compromise - "maybe not a backpack, but perhaps a sewing kit" - to repair the one they already have.

On this day, I had a feeling that Sandra needed hope in the form of a comfortable pair of shoes immediately. Her feet were so swollen that they didn't fit in the size-eight tennis shoes I brought out, nor the subsequent eight and a half's, nor the nines. Sandra finally asked for a pair of slip-on shoes. I had only brought out tennis shoes, because they are the most common shoe of choice for our guests. I was glad she finally suggested the slip-on shoes so I could better understand her need.

I ran to the basement and grabbed as many pairs of size-eight slip-on shoes that I could carry. Back in the hallway, as Sandra tried on the array of shoes, the archangel Gabriel remarked that it was just like the shoe store. Finally, a smile came to Sandra's face.

That is what we do here at Andre House - we provide comfort and stability through our consistent services; we restore dignity through the ability to choose; we offer hope through little acts of hospitality; we try to see Christ in each person we serve and pray that we shine the light of God's love on them.

"God's mercy can make even the driest land become a garden, can restore life to dry bones (cf. Ez 37:1-14). ... Let us be renewed by God's mercy, let us be loved by Jesus, let us enable the power of his love to transform our lives too; and let us become agents of this mercy, channels through which God can water the earth, protect all creation and make justice and peace flourish. "

Pope Francis

A Reflection by Ellen Dowling



This spring I ran my first marathon in order to raise money for Andre House. It seemed like a wonderful excuse to work out while giving back....a win-win situation, yes? However, as time went on, I had to face the reality that no matter how fast I ran, no matter how much I trained, it would not change

how much I raised nor improve the lives of our guests. And with that, I was able to choose to do this. I was able to put in time and effort into something that would win others' praise and approval. I felt as if the guests were being used for my own recognition, when the idea was so good at first. And while so many of our guests' dignity is stripped away continuously because of what they deal with, I was being applauded for choosing to do something that is primarily an activity of privilege...and supposedly in the name of those experiencing homelessness.

We cannot change where we come from. At Andre House, we live a life of simplicity and voluntary poverty. But in reality, I can never actually know what poverty is. I cannot change the fact that I have a family that loves me, a college degree, and that there has always been enough food on the table. However, being intentional is all we can do. Whether that is appreciating the privilege of choosing what we eat, the use of a car, or having the time and resources to run a marathon, all we can do is recognize what grace and blessings have allowed us to do these things. And, we must trust that God has the power to use whatever we are doing or dealing with as a means to show his love in the world. Offering up those long early-morning runs may have seemed disconnected at the time, but all we can do is trust that God can use any small action to bring forth His kingdom. God does not promise us an easy and painless life here on Earth, and we can never know why people are born into the situations that they are. But we don't need to know... in the end, all we can do is try over and over again to reveal God's love with our lives, regardless of what side of the serving line we are on.

Holy Week and Easter at Andre House

Holy Thursday

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

March 24th at 9:30 a.m.

We will begin the day with the Mass of the Lord's Supper in the André House parking lot at 9:30am. This will be the *only* Mass celebrated on Holy Thursday.

Holy Thursday

Washing of the Feet

4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

In remembrance of the humble act of Jesus and his call to humble servitude, each Holy Thursday the André House community gathers and washes the feet of our guests. During the nightly Dinner Service we invite our guests to have their feet washed. Those who want to participate will sit down and remove their shoes and socks. We will wash their feet in a basin of warm soapy water, dry them, apply lotion and/or foot powder and



provide a clean pair of socks. This is an intimate moment where we have a unique opportunity to serve our guests by taking care of their tired feet. Those wishing to volunteer can sign up at: www.andrehouse.volunteerhub.com.

Good Friday

Eucumenical Prayer to End Homelessness

March 25th at 8:00 a.m. in the Andre House Dining Room

Stations of the Cross

5:30 p.m.



Please meet at the Capital parking lot at 5:30PM Beginning in the Arizona State Capitol, the cross is carried through downtown Phoenix, in an area commonly known as, "The Zone," – a present day Calvary for some. Along

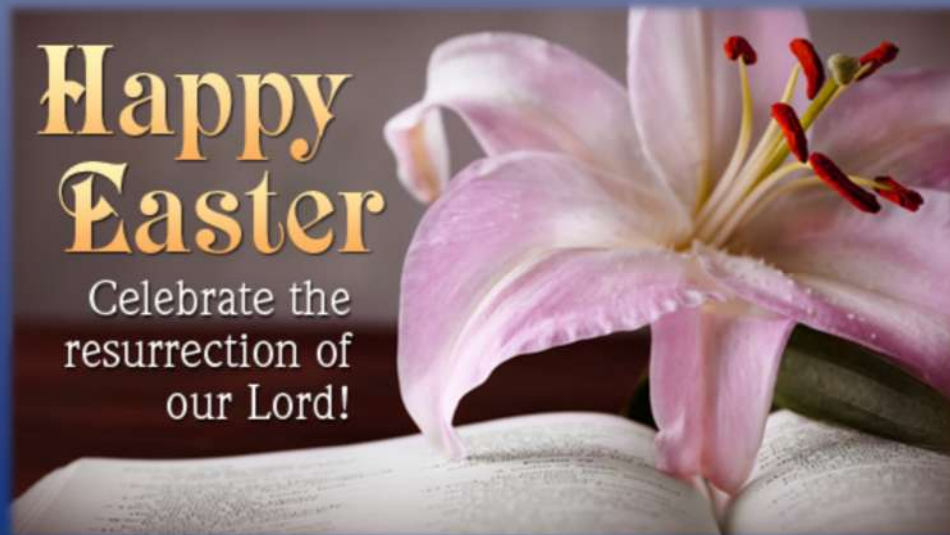
the way, we stop at the many places that provide services to people experiencing poverty and homelessness, including the CASS (the county shelter,) Health Care for the Homeless, the Lodestar Day Resource Center, St Vincent de Paul, the site of the new Human Services Campus, and of course, André House. At each station, we reflect on Jesus' road to crucifixion. We pray for justice and peace in our world with the local community and with the many generous individuals who make our ministry at André House possible.

A simple dinner at Brother Richard House, 1203 W Polk, will follow the Stations of the Cross.

Easter Sunday

11:00 a.m. Mass—1203 W. Polk

Noon - Potluck Brunch



Time Flies Here at Andre House

A reflection by Fr. Chris Letikirich, CSC



It's hard to believe how fast time flies! I still feel like it was just last week that I reported to my new assignment here at Andre House. Recently, one of my Wednesday volunteers asked me my thoughts after spending 6 months in Phoenix. I was speechless because I hadn't really reflected about the past 6 months – indeed, time has gone by so fast.

Two things come to mind. For those of you who do not know me, I am Fr. Chris Letikirich, CSC from Kenya. While in East Africa I worked as Director for Holy Cross Family Ministries running 5 different offices in 3 countries. My involvement with Andre House started after I finished my former assignment. My superiors asked me to consider serving God in the people who are experiencing homelessness in the Phoenix area and here I am today. I have been here since the first week of October and from that time I have seen the hand of God in all that we do here at Andre House. Basically, each day is a miracle. Serving more than 650 meals per night and no one ever goes home hungry, to me is a daily miracle. God's protection, his love, and his mercy are at work among his people. Our God is God of the poor and the needy and will never let them down.

I live and work with two other Holy Cross Religious: Fr. Tom Doyle, CSC the Executive Director and Br. Richard Armstrong, CSC and assisted by a team of 6 young energetic core staff with whom the mission of Andre House is met. My duties are many and varied as are all the other staff. I celebrate the Eucharist every other day, do different services, run a meal service every other Wednesday, assist at the Faith sharing program on Wednesdays, have some administrative responsibilities, and offer parochial assistance on Sundays to name a few duties. Porter and Meal Service duties are a double joy for me as

these allow me not only to meet some beautiful and generous volunteers but also accord me the opportunity to personally interact with the guests.

The work is plentiful, the hours long, but the rewards are great. Sharing a smile, word of encouragement, or a hug with someone means just as much to me (if not more) as to he or she with whom I am sharing it. If I may paraphrase the words of former U.S President John F. Kennedy, "it's not about what can you do for me, but what can I do for you". I could not do this work or live here without God's grace, love, protection and it goes without saying his mercy. I think that is the greatest lesson I have learned in the last 6 months.

Finally, the next step will be what can I do now to help the mission of Andre House? Our Lord, invites each one of us to be sensitive to the needs of those around us. Andre House's Mission of Hospitality depends entirely on the help that many individuals and groups give to it. There are many ways to help as there are people. Some people give their time and talent, others support the Mission financially, while others pray for the work. Here are some of the ways that you may be able to help:

- Pray for all of those we strive to serve and all those who come to us seeking the love of God
- Pray for us, for our core team and our services
- Volunteer in the Kitchen preparing meals, serving, or cleaning up
- Volunteer in the basement with sorting clothes and other donations
- Volunteer to help at various fundraising events throughout the year
- Donate new or used clothes, toiletries or paper goods
- Sponsor an individual for a plate of a meal
- Pray for and with us at weekday masses
- Support us financially in whatever way God directs you





Andre House
PO Box 2014
Phoenix, AZ 85001
Phone: 602-252-9023 or 602-255-0580
www.andrehouse.org

Non-Profit Org
Us Postage
Paid
Phoenix, AZ
Permit No. 2751

The Open Door

The Arizona Charitable Tax Credit for Qualifying Organizations (Formally the AZ Working Poor Tax Credit)

\$200

Provides **160** homeless and low-income individuals an evening meal.

\$400

Provides an evening meal to **320** homeless or low-income individuals.

For those who live in Arizona, **André House is a qualifying charity for the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit.** The benefit of Arizona Charitable Tax Credit is that the charity gets the money and the donor gets a dollar for dollar reduction of Arizona State tax. Take \$200 in full tax credit if you file individually, or \$400 if you file jointly.

It is easier than ever to take advantage of the **Arizona Charitable Tax Credit.** The only requirement is to **itemize your deductions on your tax return.** A baseline year of giving no longer applies. **If you itemize your deductions, your donation to André House qualifies for a dollar-for-dollar tax credit from the state.**

THREE STEPS:

- 1. Donate Dollars** - Donate online at www.andrehouse.org or send your check made payable to Andre House to our mailing address: PO Box 2014, Phoenix AZ 85001-2014.
- 2. Receive Receipt** - You will receive a receipt and acknowledgement of your donation by mail.
- 3. File Form** - File your for a dollar-for-dollar tax credit using AZ Form 321 on your Arizona state taxes. Up to \$400 for a married couple or \$200 for a single filer will qualify.