



“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry?’” (Matthew 25:37)

What a great question the righteous ask Jesus! Jesus has just told them “I was hungry and you gave me food.” As I consider the mission and work of Catholic Charities, these verses come alive! We serve in all 14 counties of the Diocese of Albany and encounter, people coming with many struggles, situations and issues. Our team, of nearly 725, strive each day to see, really see what is happening for the person before them. We have learned in our society to “not see” things if they are different or difficult and yet the ministry of care that Catholic Charities is privileged to do is all about “seeing what is,” and caring and loving and guiding the person before them to relief, assistance, solace.

We do this in food pantries and soup kitchens, on the streets in our cities, in domestic violence shelters, through mediation sessions, in mentoring, in caring for those with disabilities, in advocating for services, in supportive housing, in walking with young women who are pregnant and many other ways. No, we aren’t perfect, we don’t always do everything right but the team throughout these counties works tirelessly to “actively witness on behalf of the Scriptural values of mercy and justice.”(Catholic Charities Mission Statement).

Mercy and justice lead us on to the fact that in our world there are many people who are hungry – physically hungry, spiritually hungry, emotionally hungry. Again, we lead with kindness, talk with the person to determine what the situation is so we can not only meet the immediate need for food for the family but get closer to the root of why they are hungry. We find out what services they may be receiving and can assist to apply for food stamps, Medicaid, disability or whatever it is that is presented.

This mission is only accomplished because we are in it together. Other organizations work hand and hand with Catholic Charities as do so many of our parishes. People become regular volunteers in our food pantries and soup kitchens, people do short term things like pick up or deliver food or furniture, people make financial contributions – large and small. We have a number of people who donate each month through our Community Sustainer program to be part of this mission day in and day out. The most coveted assistance though, is your prayers for the work of Catholic Charities, our staff and all whom we are privileged to serve.

In whatever way, I pray that you may see anew those around you and acknowledge that as you are an instrument of help and care, you will be feeding your own hunger.

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