



An Advent Meditation

Christmas, once again, surrounds us. In the midst of commercialism, we, as Catholic women, are grateful for Advent to keep us focussed on the holiness of the season. Advent is a time of hope, preparation, expectation and celebration. Through acts of charity, Advent helps us to see beyond ourselves and seek Christ as our source of hope and joy. We give selflessly of ourselves as we respond to our baptismal call.

With this year's provincial focus on the homeless, how can we shape our acts of charity to encompass this theme?

I'm sure, as we speak, many councils are already immersed in the preparation of food baskets, gathering of winter coats and warm clothing, visiting the sick and shut-ins and collecting for food banks, just to name a few. At Christmas, our hearts seem to naturally open to the poor and homeless.

Homelessness, however, can be witnessed in a variety of ways. Opportunities to minister and be of service to the people of God, who may be experiencing a sense of displacement, cross our paths daily. Do you know someone, for example, whose home this Christmas will be very incomplete and painful because of the death of a spouse or child, or because of separation/divorce?

Perhaps some homes will be incomplete because grown, adult children will be spending Christmas elsewhere for the first time, parents may have entered a nursing or retirement home, or a family member may be in the hospital. Some homes may have been destroyed in fires or floods and families are gathered in new surroundings without all the familiarity of treasured traditions and décor. Reaching out to these people with an invitation to go for a coffee and being available to simply listen, or perhaps sending a card or email acknowledging their changes and promising prayers can make a tremendous difference.

For thousands of people working in retail, the Christmas season can mean precious time away from their homes. Be a shopper who shows appreciation for their minimum wage efforts. Smile at them, thank them, and leave change to cover their next coffee break, or drop off a box of chocolates for the staff to share. It will warm both your heart and theirs, to witness the response.

As women inspired by the Spirit, let us joyfully respond to God's call by being a witness of hope and celebration to all we meet during this holy season.

Merry Christmas!

Submitted by Margie Royle, Spiritual Development Sub-committee