

May 2018

Housing and Homelessness

| Day | Date | Ref. | Reflection Posts | Take Action Posts |
|-----------|------|---------------|--|---|
| Tuesday | 1 | Psalms 34:18 | Pray for friendship and hope: Pray that individuals without a support network can connect with people who will be there for them - people to encourage them and build them up. | TAKE ACTION: Talk to a person with respect. Homeless people face isolation and scorn. It means a lot when someone addresses them in a polite way. |
| Wednesday | 2 | Matthew 25:34 | Pray for sustenance and rehabilitation: Pray that those without a home to have access to practical resources, such as warm and safe shelter, hygiene services, nutritious food and clothing. | TAKE ACTION: Spring cleaning? Keep an eye out for those clothes that you no longer wear. If these items are in good shape, gather them together and donate them to organizations that provide for the homeless. |
| Thursday | 3 | Luke 4:18 | Pray for organizations serving the homeless: Pray also that the needs of these organizations would be met; that they would have enough volunteers and staff to help run their programs, as well as the financial resources to continue the work they are doing. May God's favor be on them, and may they flourish as they continue to do the work of God. | TAKE ACTION: Become familiar with programs in your area (http://nationalhomeless.org/references/directory) that provide help. When someone asks for help, you can direct that person to a program that will provide what help they need. Find one you can "adopt" where you can perhaps volunteer once a month. |
| Friday | 4 | Mat 18:10 | Pray for children who are homeless: May God give the children hope for their future and faith that God is with them always. | TAKE ACTION: Participate in <i>Project Night-Night</i> - donates more than 25,000 packages each year to homeless children (12 and under) who need childhood essentials to have a concrete and predictable source of security and an increased exposure to literacy materials during their time of upheaval. Each <i>Night-Night Package</i> contains a new security blanket, an age-appropriate children's book, and a stuffed animal — all nestled inside of a new canvas tote bag. http://www.projectnightnight.org |

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| Saturday | 5 | Heb 9:27 | <p>Reflection: Remember the account of the <i>rich man and Lazarus</i>? The rich man must have walked past Lazarus day after day and saw this poor beggar man but did nothing to help him. After death it seems the positions of both are switched. The poor man is now in Paradise or in the “bosom of Abraham” but the rich man is in torment and in thirst amidst the flames of fire. He remembers his life and now wants to warn his family but it is far too late because he oppressed the poor so long that he insulted his Maker and after his death, it was far too late because the choices he made in this life have consequences in the next life.</p> | <p>TAKE ACTION: Volunteer your professional services – No matter what you do for a living, you can help the homeless with your on-the-job talents and skills. Those with clerical skills can train those with little skills. Doctors, psychiatrists, counselors, and dentists can treat the homeless in clinics. Lawyers can help with legal concerns. The needs of the homeless are bountiful — your time and talent won’t be wasted.</p> |
| Sunday | 6 | Luke 4:18 | <p><i>“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. God has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, and that the oppressed will be set free.”</i></p> | <p>TAKE ACTION: Help start a ministry in your area. If you find that there are no programs in your area that will help with needs you see, your church or a group in your community may want to start a ministry. Maybe it's preparing a bag of necessities for homeless people in your area once a month at your Church?</p> |
| Monday | 7 | Isaiah 58:6-8 | <p>I want you to share your food with the hungry and to welcome poor wanderers into your homes. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help. If you do these things, your salvation will come like the dawn. Yes, your healing will come quickly. Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the LORD will protect you from behind.</p> | <p>TAKE ACTION: Start a journal or a conversation with someone else, explore the stereotypes, biases, and fears you have about homeless people. Be honest. What values and assumptions might be underlying these beliefs?</p> |

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| Tuesday | 8 | Psalms 34:18 | Pray for friendship and hope: Pray that those who think they are insignificant can know that God loves them through the message of the gospel. | TAKE ACTION: Watch some videos on this vlog (video blog) "Make the Invisible Homeless People Visible" See how these people and their stories connect with you. Start a conversation in your circle of friends. Check out: https://invisiblepeople.tv/ |
| Wednesday | 9 | Matthew 25:34 | Pray for sustenance and rehabilitation: Pray that our leaders will respond wisely to the challenge; that they would take special care to prioritize the needs of those who are most vulnerable. Pray for your Senators, Representatives, and the President, that God would grant them wisdom as they craft the laws that affect so many people. | TAKE ACTION: Contact your government representatives – Our legislators rarely receive more than three visits or ten letters about any subject. When the numbers exceed that amount, they sit up and take note. Personal visits are the most potent. Letters are next; telephone calls are third best. Housing issues don't come up that often, so your public officials will listen. http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/ |
| Thursday | 10 | Luke 4:18 | Pray for organizations serving the homeless: Pray for organizations, staff, and volunteers - serving the population day-in and day-out - that they do not get weary but rather press on with their efforts to meet the needs of the children of God. | TAKE ACTION: Support ministries that help poor and homeless persons. You can help by volunteering, donating in-kind goods, or making financial contributions. |
| Friday | 11 | 1 John 3:1 | Pray for spiritual renewal: Pray that those homeless people experiencing loneliness or hopelessness would find spiritual renewal through a relationship with God; that their hearts would receive comfort from God in a tangible and real way. | TAKE ACTION: Sometimes a four-legged friend can be some homeless person's only companion - and both owner and pet may be grateful of a kind gesture. Donate a bag of dog food directly to someone who has a dog with them. http://www.petsofthehomeless.org/ |

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| Saturday | 12 | Deut 15:11 | <p>Reflection: Were the Old Testament laws better than the welfare system we have today? These laws told those who lived in the land that they must “open wide your hand to your brother” and also “to the needy and the poor, in your land.” This law never limits the giving to only our neighbors and brothers, but to everyone who is in need.</p> | <p>TAKE ACTION: Shelters thrive on the work of volunteers, from those who sign people in, to those who serve meals, to others who counsel the homeless on where to get social services. For the homeless, a shelter can be as little as a place to sleep out of the rain or as much as a step forward to self-sufficiency.</p> |
| Sunday | 13 | | <p><i>Lord God of all, we pray for our neighbors in need of safe and affordable housing, and for the many families in danger of home foreclosure or mourning the loss of their homes. May we work to build communities that create space for all people to live, not just for the wealthy. Amen.</i></p> | <p>TAKE ACTION: Smile. Whether or not you choose to give change, please don't look away from homeless people as if they do not exist. Making eye contact, saying a few words, or smiling can reaffirm the humanity of a person at a time when homelessness seems to have stripped it away. For more insight into panhandling and homelessness, read “Panhandling: A Little Understanding.” at www.nationalhomeless.org/want_to_help/panhandle.html</p> |
| Monday | 14 | Psalms 68:10 | <p>Reflection: God, guide us toward long-term solutions for alleviating homelessness.</p> | <p>TAKE ACTION: Consider this: what might it look like to really live out our identities as beloved children of God <i>together with homeless people</i>, to give and receive “belovedness” in community? Draw or write your version of one way this might become a reality.</p> |
| Tuesday | 15 | Proverbs 22:2 | <p>Reflection: God, help me to remember that those persons who beg, loiter, and are homeless are also your children.</p> | <p>TAKE ACTION: Make a list about the characteristics of your home that you value. Talk as a family about how it would feel to live without these characteristics. Reflect on the concept of home. What people, places, or activities help you feel “at home”?</p> |

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| Wednesday | 16 | Job 31:32 | Reflection: God, thank you to those persons who dedicate their lives to helping the homeless, poor, and oppressed. | TAKE ACTION: Ask your company or school to host fundraising events, such as raffles or craft sales, and donate the proceeds to nonprofit organizations that aid the homeless. |
| Thursday | 17 | Romans 12:13 | Reflection: God, let my Church be open and available to the poor and suffering. | TAKE ACTION: Consider this: Not all homeless persons are alike. There are many circumstances that can cause a person to become homeless. Do not reduce these individuals to stereotypes: The homeless person you see may be a woman fleeing a domestic violence situation with her children; or someone who is working but unable to make enough to pay the rent and living out of a car; or someone who is suffering from mental or emotional challenge(s), and has fallen through the cracks of the safety net. |
| Friday | 18 | Mat 18:10 | Pray for children who are homeless: Pray for the parents in these vulnerable families that they would make wise decisions and be able to provide both practically and emotionally for their children. | TAKE ACTION: Teach. Put your skills to good use by sharing them with the homeless. Organize classes through your local shelter to teach typing, accounting, plumbing, carpentry, child care, nutrition or even a new language. Those skills can help a homeless person find work and maybe even a better life. |
| Saturday | 19 | | "The lack of safe, affordable housing requires a renewed commitment to increase the supply of quality housing and to preserve, maintain, and improve existing housing through public/private partnerships, especially with religious groups and community organizations." --USCCB, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, 2011 | TAKE ACTION: Read " <i>What Have You Done To Your Homeless Brother</i> " in the Pontifical Commission " <i>Justitia et Pax</i> " on the Occasion of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, 1987 Link: http://theolibrary.shc.edu/resources/homeless.htm |

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| Sunday | 20 | Mat 18:10 | <i>Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of God in heaven.</i> | TAKE ACTION: Homelessness jeopardizes the health and well-being of record numbers of children and youth, putting future generations at risk of adult homelessness. Watch some videos about children and families who are homeless. http://helphomelesskidsnow.org/video/ |
| Monday | 21 | Psalm 9:9 | Reflect on this: God, be with those seeking warmth, both physically and spiritually. | TAKE ACTION: A lack of affordable housing and higher costs for health care and other necessities are pushing greater numbers of older adults into homelessness. Read this and learn more: http://www.justiceinaging.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Homelessness-Older-Adults.pdf |
| Tuesday | 22 | Luke 6:30 | Reflect on this: God, help me be generous to those in need. | TAKE ACTION: It's as simple as taking a few extra sandwiches when you go out. When you pass someone who asks for change, offer him or her something to eat. If you take a lunch, pack a little extra. |
| Wednesday | 23 | Matthew 25:34 | Pray for sustenance and rehabilitation: Pray for homeless people to be willing and able to connect with long-term rehabilitation programs, social workers, job skills programs, mental health care and access to permanent housing. | TAKE ACTION: Listen deeply to the stories of homeless people. Look intently at their pictures. What themes do you hear and see? What are the commonalities and differences between your story and theirs? Meditate about the emotions you experience—respect their stories by choosing not to run from their pain. Oral History Project: https://ststephensmpls.org/oralhistory/seehear.html |

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| Thursday | 24 | 1 John 3:1 | Pray for spiritual renewal: Pray that homeless people will experience God's kindness and care throughout the day to remind them that they are not forgotten and that they are deeply loved by God in heaven. | TAKE ACTION: Reach out. Invite a homeless person to your place of worship or a local community event. Organize an outing to take homeless kids to the movies or an ice skating rink. Offer moral support when you can. |
| Friday | 25 | Mat 18:10 | Pray for children who are homeless: Pray for children experiencing homelessness, that God would protect and provide for them as they live in challenging conditions. Pray that God would strengthen their families and show special favor and love to them in the small, everyday things. | TAKE ACTION: Educate your children about the homeless – Help your children to see the homeless as people. Suggest that they sort through the toys, books, and clothes they no longer use and donate them to organizations that assist the poor. Volunteer as a family in a soup kitchen or shelter. |
| Saturday | 26 | from the USCCB | We believe decent, safe, and affordable housing is a human right. Catholic teaching supports the right to private property, but recognizes that communities and the government have an obligation to ensure the housing needs of all are met, especially poor and vulnerable people and their families. At a time of rising homelessness and when many workers' wages are stagnant and living expenses are rising, it is important to ensure housing security. | TAKE ACTION: Grocery shopping? Load up a bag full of nonperishable groceries and donate it to a food drive in your area. If your community doesn't have a food drive, organize one. Contact your local soup kitchens, shelters, and homeless societies and ask what kind of food donations they would like. |
| Sunday | 27 | Mat 25:34 | <i>"Come, you who are blessed by God[...] for I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me." Matthew 25:34</i> | TAKE ACTION: Start a ministry at your Church to support a homeless person or family. As people move out of a shelter or transitional housing program, consider raising money to contribute for a security deposit, or assist by contributing household goods, babysitting, or moral support. See if your local shelter has a partnering program. |

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| Monday | 28 | Hebrews 6:10 | Reflection: God, grant opportunity to those seeking work. | TAKE ACTION: Find a local organization that supports people finding jobs, one that offers access to showers, interview clothing, computers and resumè writing assistance. Offer to volunteer as a job coach, donate interview appropriate clothes, or personal care items. |
| Tuesday | 29 | Matthew 25:35 | Reflection: God, remind me that how I treat others is a reflection of how I treat you. | TAKE ACTION: Create and distribute homeless "survival kits" that include items such as cups, pots, pans, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, and toothbrushes. Include clean, dry undergarments and socks and bus passes! (Try coordinating this through a group that gives out meals from a van, for example.) During cold weather, organize drives for blankets, coats, hats, scarves, mittens, socks, and the like. |
| Wednesday | 30 | Mat 25:34 | Pray for sustenance and rehabilitation: Pray for our people who are serving the homeless and operating emergency shelters, that God would grant them energy and compassion to continue their work. | TAKE ACTION: At an emergency shelter, domestic violence victims or families in crisis find themselves suddenly homeless and without funds. Emergency shelters may be able to help with housing, but gift cards given directly to the emergency shelters in your community, can be passed on to these individuals and families to help purchase their basic needs. Give a gift card today. |
| Thursday | 31 | Proverbs 3:5 | Reflection: God, grant me the wisdom to know how best to respond to those who ask for help. | TAKE ACTION: Encourage your Church or community center to hire a homeless person to paint, clean, type, answer phones or any other work that might fit. Many homeless people want to work but can't find regular employment. |