Families in poverty suffer just as Jesus suffered while he was here on earth. Just like Jesus, poor families are looking for hope of a personal resurrection – deliverance out of poverty. The path may be different, but consider these striking parallels:

Jesus was betrayed - our social welfare systems were initially designed to be a safety net, but after 50 years, we see they have become more like cobwebs that keep people where they are. The system unintentionally sets families up for failure, and they are betrayed by false promises.

Jesus was deserted - families in poverty live in the shadows of society and are marginalized on a daily basis. In talking about the poor, Pope Francis said, “Those excluded are no longer society’s underside or its fringes or it’s disenfranchised – they are no longer even a part of it. The excluded are not the ‘exploited’ but the outcast, the ‘leftovers.’”

Jesus was falsely accused - families in poverty are often labeled as “lazy” and “freeloaders.” The reality is that the majority are the working poor – hard workers with full-time, minimum wage jobs. It’s just not enough to get their basic needs met.

Jesus was rejected - families in poverty are rejected on a daily basis, as though poverty is contagious through touch. Think about how many times we’ve heard “that’s a great project, but I don’t want it in my neighborhood.”

Through the resurrection, despair is turned to hope. The promise of Christ’s life, death and resurrection is that the story is not over. Through him, life and hope for the future are reborn. This is what families seek when they come to Catholic Charities.

Please take time to prayerfully read the activities and client stories shared in this newsletter. Consider your participation in helping Catholic Charities help the families we serve be delivered out of poverty by sharing your time or talents, or by a making a sacrificial gift.

Service to God through Charity,

David J. Bethuram
Executive Director
Secretariat for Catholic Charities
Legal Immigration Success Story

In August of 2015, Archbishop Tobin asked Catholic that becomes a way of life. “(Pope Francis - Message lead to a true encounter with the poor and a sharing in the injustices that are often their cause, they ought to make us sensitive to people’s needs and the needs of our staff members in the refugee program and is a safe haven at Holy Family Shelter as well as a platform to rebuild her life.

While in the shelter, after reconnecting with mental health supports and proper medications, Claire obtained a full-time position in May with a local restaurant starting at minimum wage. While Claire was able to obtain employment, she still had difficulty managing the expenses that prevented her from finding housing. Claire worked diligently to budget with her case manager to find housing that fit with her monthly income.

Months after entering the shelter, the Holy Family Transitional Housing Coordinator contacted Claire to see how her family was doing. Claire had successfully maintained housing and employment but admitted that she still feared becoming homeless again. Based on her mental health treatment plan that she developed with shelter case management staff. Since her entrance into transitional housing services, new physical health diagnoses appeared that caused her to miss work and receive reduced paychecks. However, due to her prior demonstration of commitment to her job and dependability, she was able to maintain her employment and housing by successfully budgeting and maintaining her bills. Holy Family Transitional Housing Services was able to assist with rental assistance during these difficult times while she received the medical attention that she needed, free of fear that she would become homeless as a result.

Additionally, Claire expressed concerns for her new 3-year-old daughter’s physical and cognitive development. With assistance from her case manager and her family doctor, Claire was connected with Riley’s Children’s Hospital and a speech therapist who confirmed Claire’s suspicion that Lainey was not meeting childhood targets. With her speech therapist, Claire was assisted in developing a plan to help Lainey in learning and growing. As a single mom working 40 hours per week and relying on public transportation, Claire diligently spent time at home reviewing lessons with her daughter each right to encourage her growth and give her every chance to succeed. While Claire demonstrated extreme growth by her ability to maintain employment and housing while in the program, her nagerness to be the best parent she could be was what shined through the most.

In fact, the achievement Claire was most proud of was reconnecting with family and improving her family dynamic throughout the program. In addition to Lainey, Claire had 2 other children whom she hadn’t seen in several years. As a result of a legal assistance referral, Claire was able to begin weekly visits with her 7-year-old son, Stan, and teenager daughter, Jordan. Much like her diligence in working with Lainey in improving her development, Claire sought out parenting support to assist her with her rekindled relationship with Stan and Jordan.

The Transitional Housing Coordinator was able to connect her with a parenting support group to assist her in this transition and support Claire’s goal of being a better mom.

Because of the supportive services Claire was receiving through Holy Family Transitional Housing Services, she was able to take better care of herself and be the mother she wanted to be. The family began to move from a "survive" mindset to thriving in their new life. Claire exited the program having increased income in the same job multiple times and maintained permanent housing for nearly three years. Claire graduated the program confident that her fifth time of homelessness would indeed be her last.

Simple Soup & Bread Luncheon

Every year on Holy Thursday Catholic Charities Indianapolis hosts a Simple Soup & Bread Luncheon. Each year as Lent draws to a close, we invite guests to join us for a meal of soup, salad and bread. This simple meal calls to mind the many in our community who have little to eat or go without food. Through this simple meal, we symbolically join in solidarity with our brothers and sisters.

This year, Cardinal Ritter High School art students created bowls for each guest to take home with them as a reminder of this gathering and to remember those who go without sufficient meals and nutrition through prayer, volunteering and financial support.

We want to thank Cardinal Ritter for partnering with us on this event. We would also like to thank IndyArts’ Catering and Roselyn Recipe for donating the food.

Money donations from this event support the work of Catholic Charities Crisis Office.

Mark your calendar for Holy Thursday of 2019 to join us next year.

Holy Family Transitional Housing

Claire and her 2-year-old daughter Lainey did not know where to go next. They had been to two other shelters. Claire had been homeless with a small child five times. She faced an uncertain future and did not know how to put her life back together with the help of Connect2Help 2-1-1, Claire was connected to Holy Family Shelter and entered the emergency program. Through her initial assessment with case management services, we learned that Claire suffered from ADHD, Anxiety and Depression, all of which had prevented her from maintaining employment and housing in the past. Claire had recently lost her job, fell behind on rent and was ultimately evicted from her apartment. Claire also was fleeing domestic violence from her ex-husband and found a safe haven at Holy Family Shelter as well as a platform to rebuild her life.

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