

Food for the Poor: Helping the Spiritually & Materially Poor

Throughout the Easter Season, our readings are filled with the stories of the evangelization that occurs in the early Church; how the apostles in word and deed help bring others to God. We continue that work today through the Holy Spirit guiding us to be people of hope in the world.

It goes without saying there are a number of amazing organizations that help facilitate in this, and among them is *Food for the Poor*.

The Mission of *Food for the Poor* is to link the church of the First World with the church of the Developing World in a manner that helps both the materially poor and the poor in spirit.

The materially poor are served by local churches, clergy and lay leaders who have been empowered and supplied with goods by Food For The Poor.

The poor in spirit are renewed by their relationship with and service to the poor through our direct ministry of teaching, encouragement and prayer.

Ultimately, they seek to bring both benefactors and recipients to a closer union with our Lord.

They do this in a number of ways.

One, for instance, is through education. In Honduras, because of *Food for the Poor*, a new schoolhouse was built replacing an open-air classroom with no walls, desks and furnishings; kids would have to be outside amidst mosquitos and intense heat, and rain would cancel classes. A new building was built with walls, electrical and lighting systems, a lunch area, teacher's lounge, desks and bathrooms which helped a struggling community. In Guyana, they recently set up a new library with a specific focus on educating children ages 3 to 14.

In Jamaica, many parts of the nation are shockingly barren; with trees cut and no replanting, erosion has damaged ecosystems, and increased poverty. *Food for the Poor* has stepped in to plant trees - more than 15,000 across the nation. Planting fruit-bearing trees helps establish a way for families and communities to sustain themselves for the long term, allowing families to also grow what they eat.

Food for the Poor has also helped in Guyana, helping to train farmers combine knowledge of the land of the older generation with new methods of sustainable agriculture farming in the community of Baramita.

And then there are individuals who are helped too. In Jamaica, one family was living in a rickety house with wood lats, rusty zinc sheets and scraps with sharp edges that was

dangerous for the family, not to mention leaky. With *Food for the Poor* assisting, a family was helped with a new home built that changed their lives.

The stories like this are endless, and it's been a joy to welcome once a year a priest from *Food for the Poor* to visit our parish. The visiting priest does not take up a second collection, but does share missionary stories of his work, and invites parishioners to consider donating by taking some materials home with them.

I first learned about *Food for the Poor* about 10 years ago, learning that they would come to our parish, and once or twice a year, being gone over a weekend on a vacation, *Food for the Poor* will have a priest visit our parish to offer Mass for these weekends.

This weekend, I'm pleased to welcome Fr. Robert W. Nalley. Fr. Rob was ordained a deacon in 1973 and a priest on August 3, 1975. He was born December 1, 1944. In addition to pastoring parishes and administering their schools, he has served in Diocesan ministries during his priesthood. He is the Judicial Vicar Emeritus of the diocese of Gaylord and was Director of Priestly Life, Consultor, Presbyteral Council chairperson, and member/chair of the Retirement board. He is grateful for the opportunities God has offered him to serve. Post retirement, he has been a speaker for *Food for the Poor* since 2014.

Father Nalley's work with *Food for the Poor* is motivated by his conviction that the wholistic and Christian work of this organization not only meets immediate needs but creates self-sustaining communities which are life transforming. Parish visits allow him a place to celebrate the Eucharist with local communities and deepen his appreciation to of the breadth and depth of the Catholic community in our Country.

Thanks so much for welcoming him this weekend. I'm taking a spring road-trip to the Texas Gulf Coast, spending some quiet time photographing the migrating birds, and I'm very thankful for Fr. Rob's visiting our parish and for the generosity shown by so many to our missionary work that we help with several times a year, including the dedicated parishioners who go each summer to the Dominican Republic to help with similar work done by *Food for the Poor*.

God bless and have a blessed week, and never forget what a difference each of us can make to change this world for the better through the power of hope.

Peace,

Fr. Paul