

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

Please be seated.

Good Morning! For those of you who do not know me, my name is Linda Barber and I have been the Parish Administrator here at Trinity for quite some time.

TODAY'S GOSPEL TELLS US TO SELL WHAT YOU OWN AND GIVE TO THE POOR. AND THEN PETER SAYS TO JESUS LOOK WE HAVE LEFT EVERYTHING AND FOLLOWED YOU. JUST TAKE A MOMENT AND THINK ABOUT THIS.....

COULD YOU IN THIS DAY AND AGE GIVE UP ALL YOUR CREATURE COMFORTS AND FOLLOW SOMEONE. MANY TIMES THIS PASSAGE IS REPEATED IN DIFFERENT GOSPELS AND LESSONS. IT ALWAYS MAKES ME TAKE THAT MOMENT TO STOP AND THINK. ISN'T THIS WHAT SOME PEOPLE HAVE DONE. FOR EXAMPLE, LAST WEEK WE HEARD ABOUT ST. FRANCIS - HE WAS ONE OF SEVEN CHILDREN BORN TO A RICH MERCHANT. HIS PARENTS HOPED HE WOULD GROW TO BE A GREAT RELIGIOUS LEADER. ONE ACCOUNT OF FRANCIS IS: FRANCIS WAS SELLING CLOTH AND VELVET IN THE MARKETPLACE ON BEHALF OF HIS FATHER WHEN A BEGGAR CAME TO HIM AND ASKED FOR ALMS. AT THE CONCLUSION OF HIS BUSINESS DEAL, FRANCIS ABANDONED HIS WARES AND RAN AFTER THE BEGGAR. WHEN HE FOUND HIM, FRANCIS GAVE THE MAN EVERYTHING HE HAD IN HIS POCKETS. HIS FRIENDS QUICKLY CHIDED AND MOCKED HIM FOR HIS ACT OF CHARITY. SHORTLY THERE AFTER FRANCIS GAVE UP HIS LIFE OF LUXURY. HIS FATHER WAS HIGHLY INDIGNANT AND ATTEMPTED TO CHANGE HIS MIND, FIRST WITH THREATS AND THEN WITH BEATINGS. FRANCIS RENOUNCED HIS FATHER, LAYING ASIDE THE GARMENTS HE HAD RECEIVED FROM HIM. FRANCIS WAS SAID TO HAVE VISIONS OF CHRIST IN WHICH WAS IS REPORTED TO BE SAID TO HIM, FRANCIS, FRANCIS, GO AND REPAIR MY HOUSE WHICH, AS YOU CAN SEE IS FALLING INTO RUINS. HE THOUGHT THIS TO MEAN THE RUINED CHURCH IN WHICH HE WAS PRESENTLY PRAYING, AND SO SOLD SOME CLOTH FROM HIS FATHER'S STORE TO ASSIST THE PRIEST THERE FOR THIS PURPOSE. RETURNING AGAIN AND AGAIN TO A LIFE OF POVERTY AND FOLLOWING JESUS. AND THEN, THERE IS ST. THOMAS A BECKET, THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY BORN AROUND 1118, FROM HIS EARLIEST YEARS HE WAS WELL TAUGHT AND ASSOCIATED WITH GENTLEFOLK. He eventually became the most trusted OF ALL OF THE CLERKS OF THEOBALD, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY. AGAIN GETTING UP HIS WORLDLY POSSESSIONS TO COME AND FOLLOW JESUS. ONE MODERN DAY SAINT IS MOTHER TERESA BORN AGNES GONXHA BOJAXHIU, AUGUST OF 1910 IN SKOPJE, MACEDONIA (MANY AMNESTY CLIENTS HAVE COME FROM THIS REGION). AT THE AGE OF 12 SHE FELT STRONGLY THE CALL OF GOD. SHE KNEW SHE HAD TO BE A MISSIONARY TO SPREAD THE LOVE OF CHRIST. IN

1995 SHE STARTED HER OWN ORDER, THE MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY WHOSE PRIMARY TASK WAS TO LOVE AND CARE FOR THOSE PERSONS NOBODY WAS PREPARED TO LOOK AFTER. AGAIN FOLLOWING THE CALL TO COME AND FOLLOW ME. LAST MONTH WE HEARD FROM JILL AND SARA KYLER AS THEY TOOK UP THE CALL TO AFRICA TO SPREAD THE WORD.

TODAY LITERALLY MILLIONS OF PEOPLE HAVE TRUSTED IN GOD AND WALKED AWAY FROM HOMES, BROTHERS AND SISTERS, MOTHERS AND CHILDREN AND FIELDS OF PERSECUTION. TRUSTED IN THE LORD TO FIND A NEW BETTER LIFE FOR THEIR FAMILIES. ISN'T THIS THE SAME? WHAT DO WE DO HERE IN THIS TIME AND SPACE.

THE SANDWICH BOARD HAS HELPED THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE ON A JOURNEY, HOPEFULLY TO A BETTER LIFE. THIS YEAR SO FAR WE HAVE SERVED OVER 4,700 LUNCHES. ALL OF YOU WHETHER YOU HAVE BEEN TO OUR THURSDAY CONGREGATION - AND YES, IT IS A CONGREGATION HAVE HELPED THROUGH YOUR PRAYERS AND YOUR SUPPORT OF TRINITY BY PROVIDING A SAFE HOME. YOU HAVE HELPED! ALL ARE REWARDED IN THE SHARING OF OUR LORD'S SUPPER IN BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT.

OUR FRIENDS FROM THE THOMPSON CENTER ARRIVE TWICE WEEKLY. ALWAYS TO BRING THEIR UNIQUE, FRIENDLY, PERSONALITIES - THEY SHARE WITH THE THURSDAY CONGREGATION AND WHEN THEY ARE NOT HERE - THEY ARE TRULY MISSED. IT IS A GREAT PERSONAL REWARD FOR ME TO HAVE THEM HERE - MARIO, JULIE, ALFRED, C C AND MALCOLM - WHO CANNOT SEE THE GRACE OF GOD IN THEIR EYES. THEY HAVE CAME A LONG WAY ON THEIR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY, GAINED MANY NEW SKILLS AND INTERACTION WITH THE FOLKS.

COMMUNITY SERVICE WORKS PROVIDE MANY NEEDED HOURS OF NECESSARY WORK. WE TRY TO ENCOURAGE AND HELP THEM. THEY TOO ARE ON A JOURNEY. THEY HAVE MANY SKILLS.

LASTLY, THE AMNESTY CENTER HAS SERVED THOUSANDS AND THEIR JOURNEY IS LONG, HARD, STRUGGLING AND OFTEN TIMES FILLED WITH GREAT DANGER. THE EMOTIONS RUN HARD AND HEAVY. JESUS MUST HAVE WHISPERED IN MANY AN EAR. **COME FOLLOW ME. AMERICA IS A PROMISED LAND FOR YOUR FAMILIES AND FOR OPPORTUNITY.** I'M REMINDED OF MY GRANDDAUGHTERS OF ONE OF THEIR FAVORITE SONGS. THE WHEELS ON THE BUS GO ROUND AND ROUND. ALFRED FROM THE THOMPSON CENTER HAS DOWN SYNDROME - YET AND I KNOW YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD THIS STORY BEFORE, BUT IT BEARS REPEATING. I FOUND OUT HE WAS A PERMANENT RESIDENT AND LOVED THE UNITED STATES IN ALL HE DID. FROM WEARING RED, WHITE AND BLUE TO DECORATING HIS ROOM WITH FLAGS AND UNITED STATES MEMORABILIA. HE WROTE ON A PAPER AT LEAST 50 TIMES = I WANT TO BE A UNITED STATES CITIZEN. I INCLUDED IT WITH HIS APPLICATION. The family asked if I could attend his interview. OF COURSE, WE ALL WENT TO CHICAGO . THE INTERVIEWER SAID DO YOU WANT TO GO AND LIVE IN THE PHILIPPINES - **no**

ALFRED REPLIED, ONLY FOR VACATION. ON THE WALL BEHIND THE OFFICER WAS A PICTURE OF THE STATUE OF LIBERTY - ALFRED SAID, LIBERTY! WHAT A REWARDING JOURNEY, THE EYES OF GOD REFLECTING AND SHINING IN AND THROUGH HIS EYES.

IN THIS LAST MONTH I AGAIN HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF ATTENDING AN INTERVIEW I SAID, "I" BUT WERE IT NOT FOR ALL OF YOU AGAIN WITH YOUR PRAYERS AND OFFERING OF THIS SPACE IT WOULD NOT HAPPEN. I ATTENDED THE INTERVIEW FOR CITIZENSHIP/NATURALIZATION WITH OUR OWN GRACE AMOABIN. THE APPLICANTS FOR NATURALIZATION ARE TOLD THERE WILL BE 10 QUESTIONS AND IF YOU ANSWER 6 YOU ARE DONE. SHE DID! ONE OF THE QUESTIONS ASKED OF GRACE WAS "WHAT IS ONE OF THE FREEDOMS GUARANTEED UNDER THE BILL OF RIGHTS.

GRACE REPLIED, FREEDOM OF RELIGION. ON FRIDAY GRACE AND MEMBERS OF THIS COMMUNITY ATTENDED HER NATURALIZATION/OATH CEREMONY SHE IS NO LONGER AN ALIEN RESIDENT BUT A CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. GRACE, PLEASE STAND. THANK YOU, GRACE FOR LETTING ALL OF US SHARE ON YOUR JOURNEY AND HOPEFULLY, FOR YOU SOON TO BE REUNITED WITH YOUR FAMILY.

PEOPLE FROM OUR HELPING CHURCHES OF SANDWICH BOARD HAVE BENEFITTED BY THE AMNESTY CENTER - PEOPLE FROM THE THOMPSON CENTER HAVE BENEFITTED. THE WHEELS ON THE BUS GO ROUND AND ROUND AS THEY WITH INTERTWINE IN OUR LIVES.

IN CLOSING, IN OUR OFFERTORY HYMN FOR TODAY WE WILL SING, HEAL THE SICK AND PREACH THE WORD.....AND THE REFRAIN WITH THE SPIRIT'S GIFTS EMPOWER US FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY.

FOR GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE AND THEY HAPPEN RIGHT HERE IN OUR HOME OF TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN AURORA, IL. WITHOUT ALL OF YOU ALL THINGS THROUGH GOD WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE.

AMEN