

November 6, 2011



'Lord, Lord, open the door for us!' But he said in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, I do not know you.' Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour.
Matthew 25:11-13

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

On this Thirty-Second Sunday of Ordinary Time, we hear the Gospel of St. Matthew, where Jesus admonishes us to 'stay awake,' to follow God faithfully and not deter from the teaching of the Lord. It is appropriate then that we pay heed to the Gospel and are attentive to our sisters and brothers in Christ who are in need. We cannot be deterred by the distractions of daily living and overlook these people of God. This weekend, November 5-6, I ask that you respond generously to the second collection for Catholic Charities of Central Florida.

Because of your generous support through the years, Catholic Charities of Central Florida has evolved as the number one second responder for those affected by natural disaster and the premier social service agency in Central Florida. While the annual Our Catholic Appeal and the most recent *Alive in Christ* campaign also supports Catholic Charities of Central Florida, **this second collection is used exclusively for direct assistance to the needy**. It helps the working poor with mortgage payments, utilities, rent, food and other requirements of maintaining a home and keeping families together during difficult times.

In the central region, a physically disabled 45 year-old woman lost her mother, sister and brother in the same year and was left with expenses that depleted her monthly income. Your loving embrace carried her to manage her expenses and work a part-time job to supplement her income.

In the northern region, a recently widowed father of three young children was referred to Catholic Charities for help with his utility bill. During this time, he was laid off from his paramedic profession. Payment of the utility bill was important because one of his children needed a breathing machine which required electricity. You delivered hope to this family.

In the western region, you brought comfort to an older overwhelmed, disabled couple who received assistance for their rent and electricity bills. They now ask to become volunteers for Catholic Charities of Central Florida for being there when "no one else would help us in our worst days."

In the eastern region, a middle-aged man had broken his legs from a three-story fall. He was displaced without a permanent home. You gave the gift of healing offering a life of pride and self-sufficiency through appropriate medical care, a full-time job and an apartment for which he can afford.

In the southern region, a family of five moved to Central Florida for the father's new job, only to find upon arrival that the position had been cut because of downsizing. Your kindness assisted the family with rent payments and referrals until the father found another position. Now, the mother is also working part-time and the family's situation is stabilized.

There are countless stories of people in need who have seen the face of God through your wondrous generosity. Heed the Lord's words to 'stay awake' so that the Lord will know of your resplendent works and the door will be open to you as you have opened it for those who are unable. I thank you for your gift to Catholic Charities through the second collection the weekend of November 5-6.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Noonan".

Most Reverend John Noonan
Bishop of Orlando