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BULLETIN

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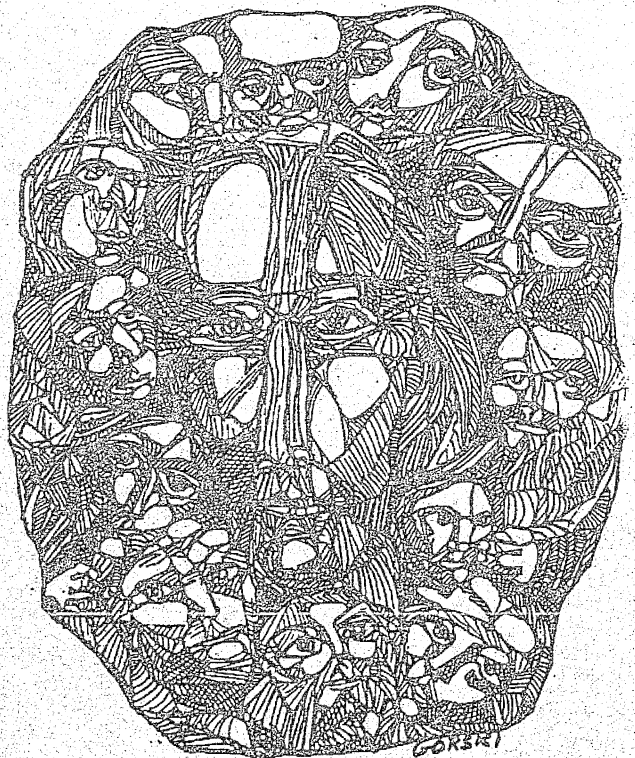
Office of University Ministry  
University of Notre Dame

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## One Balanced Act of Love

Over Christmas I had the opportunity to do some volunteer work at Sarah's Circle, a drop in center for street women in uptown Chicago. During my brief visit there and after a few conversations with the women I marvelled at the "pilgrim type" of existence they live and how strong they are to fight the apparent worthlessness of their life. Within a twenty-four hour period many of these women have to journey to four or five different places to receive the necessary food and shelter to stay alive.

I was saddened to think how quick I was to presume that their lives are worthless and how today, society is so content to write off these women as "bag ladies." I began to wonder what purpose their lives serve, how and where they fit into the body of Christ?

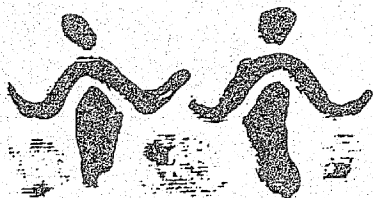


by Jo Giarrante O.S.F.

*...He has sent me to bring good tidings to the poor...liberty to captives...*

Paul tells us in today's second reading that "the body is one and has many members, but all the members, many though they are, are one body ...the body of Christ." It would seem almost blasphemous for us to say we do not need these women since Paul reminds us that each single part of the body contributes to the well being of all. "The eye cannot say to the hand "I do not need you," anymore than the head can say to the feet, "I do not need you." Even those members of the body which seem less important are in fact indispensable. To admit that we need them is to say that there is as much of God in them as there is in each one of us thus making us all creatures of God and members of the one body. How then, do they serve the body?

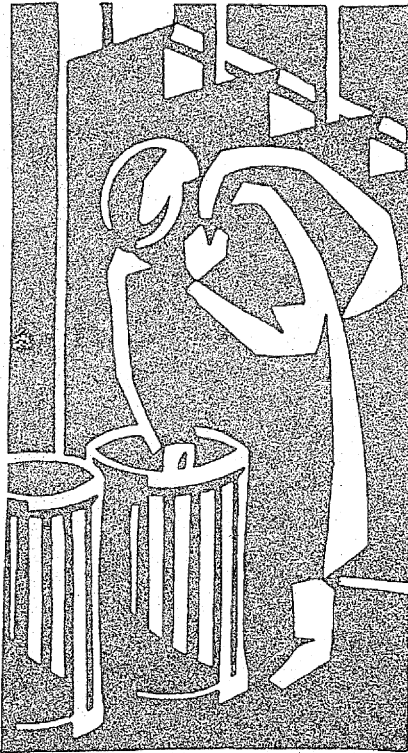
It occurred to me that one of the more obvious ways they serve me is that their pain arouses in me a compassion, and a freedom and desire to enter their world in order to become familiar with the injustices of their condition a condition which ultimately reflects my own pain and my own brokenness..



Somehow, though, these women have to be more than instruments for our betterment otherwise our posture will always be one of receiving rather than giving.

What, then, do we have to give them and how do we serve them? Luke's gospel tells us that like Jesus, we are sent "to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind and release to prisoners." These women challenge us to free them, to bring a word of hope, and to turn their darkness into light.

It is in meeting the challenge that our give and take works its way into one balanced act of love. It is this balance that gives us a vision to see that the challenge to free them is also a challenge to free us. If we do not keep this vision in front of us, of who these women are and how they belong as members of the body of Christ, we will end up remaining content with seeing them either merely as objects, outcasts who are dispensible enough to be left on the fringes of society, or at best, as an instrument of our own growth. Perhaps more than anything else then, Paul calls us to hold on to that vision, and not to lose sight of the power that all members of the body have to liberate one another.



You will find that charity  
is a heavy burden  
to carry, heavier than  
the kettle of soup and  
the basket of bread.

But you must your gentleness  
and your smile keep.

Giving soup and bread isn't all  
that the rich can do.

The poor are your masters  
terribly sensitive: exacting  
as you will see.

But the uglier and dirtier they are  
the more unjust and bitter  
the more you must give them your love.

It is only because of your love—  
only your love—  
that the poor will forgive you  
the bread you give them.

St. Vincent de Paul

**I**n the whole world, Christ suffers dismemberment . . . His Mystical Body is drawn and quartered from age to age . . . As long as we are on earth the love that unites us will bring us suffering by our very contact with one another, because this love is the resetting of a Body of broken bones. □ THOMAS MERTON

**W**e cannot wish men to be unhappy so that we may have a chance to show our mercy. You give bread to a poor man; it would be far better if none went hungry, and such help was not needed. Do away with misery and there will be no need for works of mercy. But will the glory of charity cease to exist because there are no more works of mercy? □ ST. AUGUSTINE

# *University Ministry Collection Report*

Total Collection: \$37,230.94  
 Disbursement: \$28,445.41  
 Balance: \$ 8,785.53

*July - December*

## Disbursement

### Special Projects

Campaign for Human Development (Diocese)	\$2,000.00
Colombian Fund	1,950.00
Kevin Hurley Fund	2,017.05
Mexican Earthquake Fund	1,778.90
Mission Sunday - Holy Cross	4,357.18
Puerto Rican Mudslide Relief Fund	650.00
St. Vincent De Paul (from Poor Box)	930.00
Thanksgiving Fund (Hunger Coalition)	662.28
subtotal:	<u>\$14,345.41</u>



### General Disbursement

Andre House (Shelter, Holy Cross)	\$1,200.00
Bread for the World	200.00
Corvilla	200.00
Covenant House	200.00
Holy Cross Justice & Peace Center	3,000.00
Holy Cross Mission Center	1,000.00
Holy Cross Missions	1,000.00
Hope Rescue Mission	500.00
Memorial Hospital	200.00
Our Lady of the Wayside (Cath. Workers House)	500.00
Phoenix House (Home for recovering women alcholics)	500.00
Precious Blood Sisters	100.00
Rev. Larry Kanyike (Uganda)	300.00
St. Augustine's Soup Kitchen	500.00
St. Vincent De Paul	1,000.00
The Catholic Worker	200.00
The Christophers	50.00
United Religious Community	500.00
University staff member - fire victim	250.00
Volunteer Services - Center for Social Concerns	2,500.00
Women's Care Center	200.00
subtotal:	<u>\$14,100.00</u>

Total: \$14,345.41 + \$14,100.00 = \$28,445.41

The rabbi of Sassov once gave away the last money he had in his pocket to a man of ill repute. His disciples threw it up to him. He answered them: "Shall I be more finicky than God, who gave it to me?"