

Feeding Others – Feeding our Souls 2009 Lenten Alms Project

The focus of a Catholic Alms program is to align resources in a broad scope with the Corporal Works of Mercy which include feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and tending to the sick and imprisoned.

Over the years, St. Raymond has supported organizations locally and throughout the world. With the unprecedented decline in our economy and loss of jobs in our community we have turned closer to home to focus our alms giving during Lent. The St. Raymond's Emergency Assistance Fund and The St. Alphonsus Food Pantry will share in our Lenten Alms.

The St. Raymond Emergency Assistance Fund was formed in 1998 by Fr. Bernie with the support of Parish Council. It has led a noble but relatively quiet mission to support St. Raymond Parishioners in need. During the past 11 years, the Fund has provided over \$140,000 in assistance to St. Raymond parishioners. Assistance includes the payment of utility bills, rent, home repairs, tuition for religious education and day school, medical expenses, Christmas toys for children and the purchase of food. The Fund attempts to create a bridge to a needed parishioner or family when all else is lost. To ensure stewardship on everyone's behalf, checks are written from the Emergency Fund directly to the vendor, and per Archdiocesan Best Practices, a written bill or correspondence must accompany any requests. Parishioners in need apply directly to the Office of the Pastor where a determination of assistance is made and delivered.

St. Alphonsus Food Pantry serves residents of Mount Prospect, Prospect Heights and Wheeling. With the difficult economy, the Food Pantry has been particularly active. During their last open day, they provided bags of food to 163 families. This time last year, that number was about 90-100 families. The Food Pantry is open from 10-12 on the first and third Saturdays of the month and run by volunteers from St. Alphonsus. All donations of food and money are directed to the stocking and supply of the food pantry.

In conjunction with our Parish alms, we are asking the school children, both Day School and Religious Ed to participate in two ways. First, as we did last year, we are providing an envelope for children to accumulate small donations that they may earn through allowance or extra chores. The second way that we are asking the children to participate is through a Food Drive. This Food Drive will take place from March 11 – 18 for both the Day School and Religious Ed.

For a complete list of items needed by the St. Alphonsus's Food Pantry, please visit their website (www.saintalphonsus.com – click on “the Parish” tab, then on “Outreach”, then on Food Pantry)

There is no greater gift than to provide Corporal Works of Mercy which include feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and tending to the sick and imprisoned. Through your support of alms during Lent we will provide needed support to St. Raymond parishioners in need and nearby residents who are hungry.