

POVERELLO NEWS



**ENRICHING THE LIVES AND SPIRITS
OF ALL WHO PASS OUR WAY**

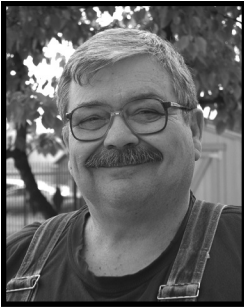


**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2015
7:00AM – 11:00AM
WOODWARD PARK
FRESNO, CA**

Join us on October 3rd at Woodward Park to support the work Poverello House provides to those in need. Bring your family and friends to participate in the 3rd Annual Run for Meals 5K Run or 2 Mile Walk. All proceeds will benefit Poverello House to continue to provide vital services for the poor, hungry and homeless. Any way you choose to contribute will make a difference. Please come to join the fun.

Register online at POVERELLOHOUSE.ORG/5KRUN
or call **559-498-6988** for event details.

**SEPTEMBER 2015 (559) 498-6988
WWW.POVERELLOHOUSE.ORG**



Living on Poverello property has its pros and cons. A big pro is that I'm close to work. A con is that I'm close to work. Pov issues tend to spill over into my personal space.

One of those issues is vermin. We have regular pest control here, but sometimes it's not up to the task of eliminating some of the more rugged critters.

On occasion, I run across a cockroach at my house. One such encounter was the catalyst for a very sad incident.

I have silver spoon that means a lot to me. No, I wasn't born with it in my mouth, but it came to me from my dear late friend, Brother Kurt. He got it from a very special lady.

Back in San Francisco, one of the tasks of the Franciscan brothers in the St. Boniface parish was to help elderly residents of an assisted living facility. Kurt and I used to attend to several people there, but one in particular was a favorite of ours.

This lady had traveled around the world when times were better for her. She was sophisticated and classy, but also very approachable. She jokingly called me her "little pixie." Every Sunday, I'd help her get in her wheelchair and take her to Mass. She used to love for me to get going fast down the hallways.

Anyway, before she passed away, she gave Kurt some of her things. The spoon was part of a family heirloom silver set. Kurt,

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being Kurt, didn't put much stock in material things, and passed the spoon on to me after she died.

I've kept it all these years because it reminds me of her, Kurt, and one of the best epochs in my life—when I was newly free from drugs, involved at the San Francisco Poverello, and for the first time making a positive contribution to helping others.

I use the spoon a lot. It's my favorite. So it was really stupid of me to react like I did when I saw that cockroach jump out of the sink at me. I was bringing my dishes to the dishwasher, and I grabbed my spoon and whacked the roach. I killed it, but in the process, the spoon broke at the upper handle.

I cursed myself for being a fool, and later I took it to a jeweler to see if it could be repaired. I frankly didn't have much hope for it. To my surprise and great happiness, the jeweler said that he could probably fix it.

When I got it back, it looked perfect. You can't see where the break was, thanks to the master craftsman who mended it.

Maybe it's a corny metaphor, but it seems to me that the spoon is very much like so many people I encounter at Poverello House: precious but broken, seemingly beyond repair. The thing is, what I consider beyond repair may not be so to the Master Craftsman. Throughout the years, I've repeated the phrase, "God don't make no junk," and at times, I think that I don't always believe it. I do believe that everyone is beloved in His sight, but sometimes by the time people get to us, they've pretty well junked their lives, to the point that I don't see any way out.

But the Master Craftsman who made us all is God, and maybe he can repair what I can't even imagine can be fixed. However, as Father Simon once said, God's a gentleman, and doesn't compel anyone to come back to Him.

That spoon would have remained broken unless I had taken the initiative to bring it to a jeweler. It was a hope against hope, because I thought I'd ruined it for good, but in the right hands, it came back to me better than new.

Sometimes a broken human needs someone to show him that there's a Master Craftsman, and because of that there is hope. My

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job at Poverello is not to fix people, but to help with basic necessities, in kindness and love. Then maybe, just maybe, they'll realize that all is not lost, and that the Master is eagerly but patiently waiting for them.

Mike

3rd Annual Run for Meals

Don't forget to mark your calendars for Saturday, October 3, 2015 at Woodward Park for the third annual **Poverello House 5k Run for Meals**. You can run, walk or just come out and support those who do. There will also be fun activities for children, so bring the kids!

Registration will begin at 7:00 a.m. the day of event. The 5K run begins at 7:45 a.m., the two-mile walk begins at 8:00 a.m.



and the Kids Zone starts at 8:00 a.m. You can also register early by downloading the registration form at www.poverellohouse.org/5krun. Each participant will receive a tee-shirt and refreshments following the run/walk.

All proceeds from this fun event will benefit Poverello's mission to the homeless, so just by coming and participating, you'll be helping Poverello House to continue serving destitute and hungry people in our community.

Papa Mike's Short Takes

Founder Mike McGarvin is a story magnet. Just because of who he is, the homeless flock to him and tell him about their woes, their needs, their small triumphs, and their struggles. You hear some of these tales in Mike's monthly columns, but sometimes there are stories that are too short, don't have a conclusion, or are somehow too insignificant to weave into his monthly message.

Keeping this in mind, we've come up with *Papa Mike's Short Takes*, collections of passing encounters that we'll print on an irregular basis. While Mike was unable to turn these into an entire column, they nevertheless provide some insights into life on the streets. Here are a few:

A woman came to Mike with a story that made him take two giant steps back. She was staying at a motel, able to get off the streets for awhile, when her boyfriend brought in a blanket infested with bedbugs. Soon, the motel bed was crawling with them, making her attempts to sleep miserable. She was covered with bites. However, she saw no way out of this, because she was afraid that if she told the motel manager, she'd be kicked back out onto the streets. This is a good illustration of an issue that many homeless people have—fear of confronting problems because of potential consequences. Precariousness is the essence of homelessness.



After all he's seen and heard, Mike sometimes makes the mistake of thinking he's immune to being shocked, and he is constantly surprised to discover that he was wrong. The latest of these unpleasant surprises occurred when a man was chatting with Mike, and out of the blue started talking about how his mother used to tickle him.

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“Man, I HATED that. I told her to stop, over and over, and she’d just ignore me and keep it up. So you know what I did? One day I caught her napping, and I boiled some water and threw it on her face. She’ll never do that to me again! Every time she looks in the mirror, those scars remind her that she shouldn’t have messed with me.”

Mike was appalled, because he couldn’t imagine someone doing that to his own mother. It was a sobering reminder that evil and mental illness are never far from the streets.

Finally, Mike recently paid to put a family up at a motel for a week. The mom and dad had four kids under ten, the youngest only two months old. This kind of situation is always difficult, because Mike doesn’t like to reward bad choices of adults, but when children are in the mix, it creates a whole different dynamic. One thing that hit Mike hard was hearing that when the parents ran out of money, they sent the kids to sell items outside of restaurants.



What can we conclude from these vignettes? Nothing earth-shattering, but the stories illuminate some facets of homelessness that not many of us would normally think about. Bedbugs, cruelty to one’s mother, and exploitation of children are all very awful to contemplate, but each case illustrates that the homeless problem is far more complex than simply finding housing for people. There are at play the fears, pathologies, and desperate behaviors that combine to sabotage hope and progress, and all these must somehow be addressed, also.

New Face in the Contact Office

The warm voice on the phone when you call Poverello House belongs to Imelda Leon, our new Contact Office Coordinator. Imelda came to us as a temporary employee last March, but once we saw how well she fit in and handled things, she was offered the Contact Office job on July 1, 2015.

Imelda hadn't done this kind of work before. Most of her experience is in the retail industry, where she worked her way up to a store manager position.



She says that when she started here, she didn't know what to expect, but very soon felt natural at the job. When you think about it, it makes sense, because successful retail is all about customer service, which is what the Contact Office is also all about. Incoming calls, homeless clients needing services, communicating with staff and security personnel, and even having to deal with emergencies are all tasks that Imelda handles with calm professionalism.

We are very glad that her prior work experiences prepared her to become such good fit for Poverello. We are grateful that she has become an integral part of our team.

September Wish List

Letter-sized copy paper * Coffee * Sugar * Olive oil
Men's underwear & socks

*To donate online, visit our website at www.poverellohouse.org
Remember, we now take credit card donations. Please see
the enclosed envelope for instructions.*

Poverello House

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Who Are We? A nonprofit, nondenominational organization that believes in the dignity of every human being. Our mission is to enrich the lives and spirits of all who pass our way, to feed the hungry, offer focused rehabilitation programs, temporary shelter, medical, dental and other basic services to the poor, the homeless, and the disadvantaged unconditionally, without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex or disability, through Providential and community support. We have been operating since 1973 and are governed by a Board of Directors, consisting of local volunteer business men and women.

Future Goals? To provide additional facilities for increased services.

How Are We Funded? Primarily through private donations from individuals, churches, businesses, and community organizations; and through United Way. Rules for acceptance and participation in the programs of Poverello House are the same for everyone, without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability.



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