

DIACONAL SUNDAY February 26, 2012

A Reflection: We are Not Goats!

By Diaconal Minister Karen Triomphe



I had arrived at the church, intending to catch up on some work when the doorbell of the church rang and there standing before me were 18 people. They were from our neighborhood but they had no homes and so they had come for the evening meal we held once a month. Only today there was a problem; the dinner date had been moved to the next week and these people had not heard that.

I was at a loss, looking at their faces filled with excitement at the thought of a good meal and some fellowship together; what a disappointment it would be once I told them. I started to walk up to the door when I heard one of the men say “Hey, it’s the church lady, she’ll be able to help us!” The church lady—yes, that is exactly who I was. I was identified as the one in the church who would listen, who would help and who would walk with them. And so, I came to the door, told them of the mix up and said if they didn’t mind spaghetti and garlic bread they were most welcome to stay.

We worked side by side preparing the meal and when it was time to eat one of the older gentlemen said “Let’s pray!” Their prayer touched me profoundly. “Father a half-hour ago we were hungry and had nothing to eat but you are good and gave us this food. Amen.”

Turning to me he said “You will never be a goat.” “A goat?” I replied. “We all know we’re not good at looking after ourselves. We are a pretty weak group and you fed us. The Bible says there are goats and there are sheep and the sheep will help those who need it. So you are not a goat!”

Hearing theology and Scripture from this street person, I was amazed and I thought about the call to diaconal ministry. We have the luxury of being able to share. We have the privilege of reaching out for Christ. And we are blessed so that even as we feed others, Jesus feeds us till we want no more. May we all recall those words “You are not a goat!”



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