

From the Director

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:



Fr. Eric Schimmel, C.S.C.

Where has the time gone?

This question comes to me for several reasons. I can hardly believe that I first came to André House in 2008 and now am in my sixth year here. So many good stories of good people here at André House. I am looking forward to the stories yet to come as well.

Of course, I also know that most of you will be getting this newsletter as the holiday season starts to move along. Halloween flows right into Thanksgiving, which is quickly followed by Christmas and the New Year. Holidays always become such busy times. I wonder how many people will force themselves to take the time to really reflect on the holidays that we will celebrate.

Time has also flown by with the numerous daily activities of André House, and as we had our changeover of staff. At the end of July we said goodbye to last year's lay Core Staff, and we welcomed three new people to join Br. Richard and I on Core. Usually we need to have seven Core Staff total, so we have been running a little short.

Through the grace of God, and the generosity of many who have been listening to the movements of the Holy Spirit to help out as they can, we have been able to keep things going pretty much as usual here. Of course, "usual" is relative when engaged in a ministry like ours. We have also felt God's grace as one of our original new Core Staff members had to leave for various reasons, and God sent us a new person to join us about a week later. The first week of November we should also welcome another new member on to Core. We also have a person who plans to interview with us the week after Thanksgiving to join us on Core.

If you know me, you know that I am a person who likes to have things well planned and organized. Not having the staff situation how it "should be" caused quite a bit of stress for me. Then again, I also remember a saying that I have heard many times over: "If you want to make God laugh, tell Him your plans."

If things had gone according to my plan, we would not have extended the invitation for as many people to come help with shifts at the Polk transitional houses, or with one of the "gate" positions during the evening soupline, or helping with showers or laundry or clothes closet, etc. We have been, as always, truly blessed by incredible volunteers.

We are also wonderfully blessed by the guests who we have. Many of them come to us facing challenges, obstacles and difficult situations. When asked how they are doing, our guests who come seeking basic necessities in life, often say that they are blessed. That attitude has encouraged me. That positive attitude spills into the way guests often help the new staff and volunteers, welcoming them in their own way to the André House family. I am also encouraged by the progress that I see some of our guests making. For example, in a six week period of time we had four different guests reach a point where they had found jobs, saved money, and have moved out of the Men's Transitional House to live on their own.



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An Exciting New Journey - by Jay Minich



Mother Theresa once told a man who asked her what he could do to help her in her quest against homelessness to “Go out into the streets, find someone who believes that they are alone, and convince them that they are not.” During my recent interview week to join the André House Core Team, I found that this is what Fr. Eric, Brother Richard, the André House Core Team, and the countless André House Volunteers do for their many guests each and every day.

I arrived for my interview week on Sunday evening just in time for “Sunday Chili Night”. The first thing I noticed was how amazingly organized, focused and relaxed all of the soup line volunteers were. They all seemed to clearly know their tasks, and they were chatting and interacting happily with each other and with the guests, intentionally creating a friendly, cheerful dinner ambience for all to enjoy. I was asked to assist with the front gate duty where André House volunteers provide tickets to the guests and coordinate entry into the dining room. Within the first half hour, I found myself in a lively discussion about world economics with a very bright guest named Mario, and I received friendly greetings from several other guests who immediately recognized me endearingly as “the new guy,” and were quick to chide me over the climatic virtues of Phoenix over my wintry hometown of Cleveland. I knew immediately that I was going to love this place (despite Fr. Eric’s hailing from Pittsburgh which we Cleveland Browns fans were taught to detest)!

On Monday morning, and each morning throughout the week, we began with a 30-minute Core Team check-in where the team shares their highlights, thoughts and feelings about the prior day’s work and the to-do’s for the day ahead. I found this helpful and effective in ensuring we were en sync, and I sensed the team then felt relaxed and free to celebrate our daily Mass with open minds and hearts and to listen to the movement of the Holy Spirit. I really enjoyed these Masses. They were intimate, reviving and inviting. All the guests are invited to join us, and I think it speaks volumes about the sense of community that the André House has built that several guests chose to do so.

Throughout the week, the André House Core Team and the many long-time André House volunteers guided me in assisting with each of the wonderful services we provide. These included Portering, Pascente Office, Clothing Closet, Showers, Men’s House, Food Pantry and Soup Line Coordination. They certainly did not go easy on me, and by the end of the week, my muscles ached and my head was spinning with all of the details of these jobs which the André House Core Team and the many André House Volunteers made look so easy. More importantly, what I saw was the André House community carrying out their duties with diligence, humility, compassion, joy and a true spirit of welcoming hospitality. These are the ingredients of building an effective community, and by the end of the week I was certain I wanted to be a part of this loving atmosphere of true Christian generosity.

So, two weeks later I am writing this reflection in a hotel en route from Chicago to the André House, ready to begin an exciting new journey as part of the André House Core Team. I feel immensely grateful that God has led me to this amazing community who has chosen to live the calling to love thy neighbor by welcoming their guests and convincing them that they are not alone. Mother Theresa would be proud!

- JM



Comradery Outside Community Life

- by Kenia Rivera

We often grow up with biological families or those we live with and are brought up with; but we also consider others to be family that may not necessarily fall into these conventional concepts of what a family is. Many times the community one is surrounded with can be considered a family as well, such as friends or those we see every day. Something I learned in the short time I have been here at André House is that there exists a built-in family. With the current staff, former staff members, as well as some volunteers, I have been blessed to feel like I have a support system from those I have only known for a short while.



Here at André House I not only find comradery within the community I live and serve with, but also with those we serve. Prior to coming to Phoenix I had been looking forward to getting the chance to interact with our guests and hopefully get to know the faces we serve daily. I was aware of the fact that I am a new face here at André House, an unfamiliar person to our guests. Therefore, I was open to the idea that our guests would not receive me as well as they did the former staff; I would not expect them to trust me until they had the opportunity to meet me and get to know me.

However, I was surprised to see how open and talkative many guests were in the first few weeks I began my year of service. The amount of kindness I had received, as well as support from many of our regular guests, definitely made me feel more at home. In the time I have been here I have felt very safe, knowing I have many of the guests' trust and respect. For example, during a conversation with a current guest he expressed to me how

thankful he is for André House and the hospitality the staff and volunteers extend to him. He then told me to let him know if I ever needed anything, come to him, and he would be happy to help out the staff in any way he can.

While talking to another guest, we both found out that we shared a commonality, which is the fact that we are both from the Boston area. At this new information he immediately told me, "Yo, I got your back. We Bostonians stick together". These men, like many of our guests, have nothing to gain by being so kind and trying to be helpful. Regardless of how guests are to us whether bitter, helpful, or indifferent, there will always be a place here at André House for them; guests will be fed, clothed, and helped out as far as our resources can go.

Many of our guests feel as if André House is their home, and many times they treat the staff as if we are family. The level of safeness and security I feel here at André House is equal to the safety I would feel as if I were back at home. It is a comforting feeling knowing many guests care about the Core Staff just as we all care about our guests. Through these many conversations we have with our guests, friendships are often formed; it is not difficult to feel a sense of comradery among the guests that we serve on a regular basis.

- KR



From the Director, - cont'd
- by Fr. Eric Schimmel, CSC

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I truly find André House to be a blessed place. Only by the grace of God, and people listening to God's voice, do we have the resources that we have to serve our guests and do our best to meet their needs. This is a special place, with special people.

In early November, we want to celebrate the special contributions that volunteers make to André House. On **Sunday, November 10th at 10:00 AM**, we will have a **Volunteer Appreciation Mass** followed by a potluck brunch. If you are in the area, I hope that you join us.

As I have been reflecting on the ways that God has blessed us at André House, I give thanks. As we move forward into the holidays, I invite you to take time to remember what we are celebrating. For example, when we sit down to table at Thanksgiving, remember to whom we offer thanks. As we move from Thanksgiving into Christmas, many will start thinking about gifts. As we think about Christmas gifts, I invite you to reflect on the incredible gift that God the Father gave us in sending His only Son for us.

We are certainly blessed, gifted, and graced. May we give thanks and see our giftedness, not just during the holiday season, but all year through.

God bless,
Fr. Eric



Thanksgiving Eve Memorial Service



November is a month of remembrance in the Catholic Church. Because of this, on **Wednesday, November 27th, Thanksgiving Eve**, the André House community of staff, volunteers, and benefactors gather at White Tanks Cemetery in Litchfield Park to remember all of the homeless men and women who have died. This powerful memorial service is a reminder to all of us of the brevity of our life on earth and prepares us to truly give thanks on Thanksgiving Day for the many blessings in our lives.

Every Thursday, deceased homeless and indigent persons for whom no relatives can be found to assume burial responsibilities are laid to rest in the bleak White Tanks Cemetery. Present to honor them are only the members of a chain gang from local prison, who provide the labor, and a rotating minister or priest to offer burial prayers. The André House staff presides over these services several times a year.

The service will begin at the **White Tanks Cemetery** no later than **8:00pm**.

Preaching Politics

- by Fr. Eric Schimmel, CSC

I write this newsletter article during the government shutdown. Those sent to Washington to govern have many tasks; one is to create and follow budgets. However, yet again, the ideological differences have morphed into such dichotomous divisions that instead of compromise and cooperation, we have ended in dictates and diatribes with the apparent delusion that if we just state our case loud enough and often enough, the other side will yield. Has anyone ever been truly convinced by stubbornness coupled by increasingly loud repetition of one's position? Beaten into submission, maybe, but not convinced.

I refuse to take sides in this acrimonious atmosphere. However, as a priest, I do not avoid taking sides because I believe in the mythical separation of Church and State which says that, as a representative of the Church, I cannot (should not?) take sides. From my perspective here at André House I am reminded of a proverb I heard when I served in East Africa as a seminarian: "When the elephants fight, the grass suffers." To take sides in this mess risks the temptation to fall into the trap that has seemingly ensnared so many: the perception that not only is my side correct, but it is absolutely correct. The corollary obviously is true: the other side is just plain wrong. Falling into that trap blinds us to the basic truth that nobody is perfect. To put it another way, "all have sinned" (Rom 3:23a). I refuse to take sides and join the fighting elephants.

As the stalemate continues over the government shutdown, with an impending fight about debt ceilings (and I pray for the miracle that all of this will be resolved by the time you read this), what irks me most about the bellicose bickering and acrimonious accusations of our verbally pugnacious pundits and politicians is the refrain that I hear said to me and to others tasked with preaching. We consistently get told that we should not preach politics.

I wonder where in the Bible people find God telling us that. If someone who desires preaching completely devoid of political implications wants to use Scripture as a basis for their argument, they usually use St. Paul's letters where he exhorts his readers to pray for those in civil authority (1 Tim 2:2), and that we need to obey civil authority (Rom 13:1-3). Yet in those very same letters St. Paul includes strong teaching that God is the sole authority and ultimate ruler (1 Tim 2:5-6, 6:14-16), and that our true master is the Lord (Rom 14:7). Even as we need to respect authorities on earth, we must first obey God and the law of the Lord. Furthermore, much of what Jesus preached and the parables He told had political implications. Those in authority, (scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees) constantly tried to trip Him up. Several parables have strong political overtones, e.g. why was it that in his parable Jesus chose a Good Samaritan to help rather than the good Pharisee? Jesus gets questioned about the temple tax and tells us to render to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God. The story of the Passion has major political undertones – Jesus was possibly upsetting the order of things. Why else involve Pilate in a private religious affair?

This is not to say that Jesus was only political. I will say that his radical call to follow the will of God first and foremost upset those in positions of political power. I feel that the same rings true today.

I believe that our Catholic Christian faith has political implications. If I truly believe that every human being has inherent dignity, made in the image and likeness of God, and therefore has the right to life and all necessary to sustain life (food, clothing, shelter, health care, work, community), then I have to work to help create a society in which these needs are met. We cannot kill, overtly or through omission. This obviously includes no abortion, death penalty, nor euthanasia. It also includes being proactive to care for people who are poor and vulnerable (there are too many Scripture passages saying this to list here). This begs the question, from where should people get

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Preaching Politics - *cont'd*, - by Fr. Eric Schimmel, CSC

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help? Does everything have to all come from the government? Should it all come from private individuals and/or corporations? No and no.

I learned early in my theological studies that the best answers tend not to come from a stance of either / or but from embracing the possibility of both / and. Is Jesus human or divine? Yes, both human and divine. Should I pray or do good works? Both pray and do good works.

I feel that people who say that we should not mix politics and religion, that they have to be completely separate entities, make a fatal mistake. I do not advocate for a theocracy. Nor do I want government to dictate religious practices. There has to be healthy respect and proper roles for the identities of both churches and government. However, I feel our faith tells us that we should not compartmentalize our lives. We need to live them as an integrated whole. To separate our faith from our political positions divides us. "A divided house does not stand" (Mk 3:25).

God created us as unique individuals with mind, body and spirit. But God did not create us compartmentalized. God created us as one. I do not believe that God ever intended us to isolate and separate one part of who we are from another. I have seen the dire negative consequences of people attempting to deny part of who they are. We are created with spiritual hunger – our hearts are restless until they rest in God. God also created us as social beings, called into community. As communities organize, the nature of how they are organized is political. How a person lives his/her life is also spiritual.

Am I trying to follow the will of the Lord with my words and actions – not just when I am in Church or trying to pray, but each moment of my life? What I say and do, and how I say things and do things has eternal consequences. At the last judgment, God is not going to look to see how well I did only in the officially spiritual times of my life. God will look at my whole life to see whether I served God rather than mammon. To put it another way, during my life did I put another god in front of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

Living one's faith in public is difficult. The Bible acknowledges that fact. It also tells us that we should not be ashamed of the Gospel (2 Tim 1:8, Rom 1: 16, 17). The Gospel impels us to respect the dignity of each person, from conception to a natural death. The world has decided that how people do that is deemed "political."

One may define it as political if they want, but God still calls us to do it. Therefore preachers should preach about our basic responsibilities to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to remind us of our obligations to do so – even when doing so seems "political." Mt. 25 tells us that what we do to the least of our neighbor, we do to Christ. Pastors not only can, but should, constantly remind us of this fact. They can, and I dare say should, point out the consequences of political policies that cause the proverbial grass to suffer. To me that is not preaching politics, it is trying to live the Gospel. I believe this is something that not only should preachers preach, but those in the congregation should do as well. When talking politics, can we dare ask each other openly what God wants? This type of "preaching" challenges people to answer a fundamental question: who will you serve? Will I identify myself as Democrat or Republican, conservative or liberal, blue or red, or somewhere in between? Or, will I identify myself first and foremost as Christian?

When asked the question, who will I serve, may my response be: "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15).

- Fr. Eric Schimmel, CSC

Mailing List



Do you want to be removed from the mailing list? (STOP!)



If any of these are true, then please use the enclosed envelope and **send the mailing label on this newsletter** with either the changes that need to be made or the word "REMOVE" on it. The list will be updated before our next mailing.

If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please contact Teresa Hipp:

Email: coordinator@andrehouse.org

Phone: 602-255-0580 x302.

If you leave the information in a voicemail, please leave a phone number in case there are questions. Thank you!

****André House's mailing list is not sold or given to any other organization****



Does your name or address need to be corrected?



Are you reading a friend's copy of *The Open Door* & want to be added to our mailing list?



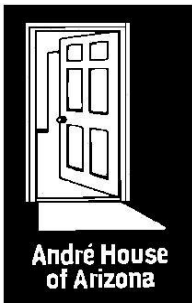
Arizona Working Poor Tax Credit

It's easy to take advantage!

This is a dollar-for-dollar credit from the State for charities helping the working poor and, beginning in 2013, donors NO LONGER need itemize their taxes to benefit from this credit. When you donate to André House, you can receive the tax credit by completing Form 321 when you file your tax return. Single individuals can earn up to a \$200 dollar-for-dollar tax credit (married, filing jointly, can earn up to \$400.) For complete details:

- Call the AZ Dept of Revenue:
602-255-3381
- Check out the AZ Dept of Revenue website:
www.azdor.gov/taxcredits.aspx
- Contact your accountant

The benefit of the **Arizona Working Poor Tax Credit** is the charity gets the money and the donor gets a dollar for dollar reduction of Arizona State tax. How can you lose?



André House
of Arizona

André House

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The Open Door



**Join us every First
Friday for Mass and
a Potluck Supper at
1203 W Polk at
6:30 pm**



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André House Needs List: *Fall Focus Items....*



- Ground Coffee
- Blankets, Belts & Backpacks
- Frozen Whole Turkeys & Hams
- White tube socks
- Jackets & Sweatshirts/Hoodies
- Men's Jeans (sizes 28-38)
- Men's Underwear (sizes 28-38)
- Men's Tennis Shoes (sizes 8-12) Shampoo (large & travel sizes)
- Sleeping Bags

Thank you & God bless!

