

The Open Door

30TH
ANNIVERSARY
NEWSLETTER

From the Director



*Fr. Tom Doyle, C.S.C.
Executive Director*

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus casted demons from a man and instructed him "Return home and recount what God has done for you." Luke 8:39. The instinct to share extraordinarily good news with the members of our households is primordial. I recall running home with a paper with a gold star on it from school or racing home on my bike after a little league game to share the good news of the day with my mom. Having a place where we belong to share good news is a human need essential for flourishing. Daily at Andre House, our guests return to us to share their good news. Last week a man who had a criminal background was waiting at the gate to see me to tell me that he had gotten a job. Although I believed him, he couldn't wait to produce the piece of paper as incontrovertible evidence. This morning, a man who received daily meals from us for months told me that he was moving into his apartment. He came to say goodbye, hugged me and asked me to share his gratitude with everyone at Andre House. For so many of our guests who have fractured

relationships with their family and friends, the Core Team and volunteers of Andre House are the home that they return to and share the good news of what God has done for them.

During the last week of October, Andre House hosted a homecoming. We celebrated thirty years of the grace and privilege of creating a home, a place where guests are cherished and loved, a place that knows guests by name, a community that provides services that affirms dignity in circumstances when it has so often been stripped. Andre House was blessed to have several of its former directors and founding fathers and mothers among us. You will hear from some of them in this newsletter. With us were volunteers from every generation who have contributed to our mission of hospitality. We celebrated Br. Richard's 29 years of service to Andre House and his 50 years as a Holy Cross Brother. For three days we told stories of the good that God has done for us.

When the homecoming weekend was over, my cup had overflowed. I was amazed by all that, and all who, have proceeded me at Andre House. I was so grateful for the legacy of which I have become a steward. Like a child, I went to my home and began to tell my mother, may she rest in heaven's peace, of all the good that God has done for us.

Peace,

Fr. Tom

Andre House Reflection

By John Fitzgerald



We have all heard that “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks”. (It’s not just *old* dogs. My sister and I had a Great Dane named Emma who flunked out of puppy obedience school!) And yet there have been repeated moments, since I became a senior, and retired, when I’ve been startled and pleasantly surprised to discover some new insight or connection that had previously eluded me.

This past year I stumbled upon a quote from G. K. Chesterton, the British theologian and poet who died on the eve of World War II. His advice was this: “Let your religion be less of a theory and more of a love affair.” Wow! Rarely in my long life have a few words so powerfully jolted me with both light and delight. It’s as though someone had planted a listening device in my soul, and summarized decades of witness and discipleship (and struggle!) with a

simple, brilliant burst of understanding.

And now, at last, I understand that it was at Andre House that my faith became less theory and more of a love affair. Consoling a bereft house guest, scrubbing a bathroom floor, shaving my arms to reach deep into a pot of pasta salad and stir in the Mayo on a beastly hot July day ... all were acts of faith. My years on Polk Street became a profound season of conversion. And I am so damn grateful to all of you (colleagues, volunteers and, especially, the people on the streets) for being my spiritual directors. Thank you!

John FITZgerald

Andre House Reflection

By Fr. Bill Wack CSC



Among the many important lessons I learned from my years of service at Andre House, I think the greatest was learning to be grateful for what I have. I was always amazed at the gratitude that our guests showed when they were given something small like a cup of ice, an extra dessert, a Bible, or clean socks. To be true, some just took what we gave them and walked away without saying a word. We don't serve others because we desire a response of course. But I have to say that it was nice to hear a simple "thank you" from our guests who were genuinely pleased with what we could do for them.

When I was back for the 30th anniversary I was approached by a couple of guests and volunteers who wanted to thank me for something I said to them maybe 10 years ago. Even though I had no recollection of what I said or what they needed at that point,

they told me that it not only helped them to get through that crisis; it actually saved their lives. Talk about being humbled! Truly this serves as a reminder that God works in and through us if only we allow Him to do so.

I am so grateful to God, to Holy Cross, and to the community of Andre House for being patient with me and for allowing me to have so many wonderful experiences of life and love. The words at the end of our funeral liturgy speak to this perfectly: "We give you thanks, O God, for the blessing which you bestowed about our (brother/sister) in this life. They are signs to us of your goodness and of our fellowship with the saints in Christ."

Andre House Reflection

By Fr. Eric Schimmel, CSC



Among many things I learned in my years at André House, I learned the importance of gratitude. Not the importance of expecting or looking for gratitude from others. Instead, the importance of being grateful; how cultivating gratitude

changes who I am and how I look at things. Therefore, when Fr. Tom invited me to share something for the newsletter around a theme of thankfulness, I jumped on the opportunity.

Our guests taught me a lot about thankfulness. From those who expressed appreciation for being accepted into the transitional house expressing how they see that as a potential life changer, to the guest who looks up to say thanks when receiving something seemingly so simple as a bottle of water – knowing the unfortunate fact that many in our society do not make eye contact with people experiencing homelessness – I have experienced the blessing of gratitude.

Halloween weekend, as we celebrated Br. Richard's 50th anniversary as a Holy Cross Brother, and 30 years of André House, my heart welled with emotion. One moment on Saturday morning, while we gathered for a reflection, really touched me. A guest came forward to share on the topic we were discussing. Honestly, I do not remember most of what he came forward to say. I was struck by what he said as he took the microphone in front of the group gathered together.

"I have never been in a place with so many nice people," he started as he looked up at us. "I have never been in a place where people don't judge because of how I look." As he started to share his main point, in passing he said, "I live at the bridge. . ."

I have never been in a position to utter those words. I have been blessed with so many nice people surrounding me, throughout my childhood, my years in formation to become a Holy Cross priest, my years of ministry as a priest. God, I am grateful!

Though there have been times in my life when I have felt judged, and I feel like this is an unfortunate occurrence heightened in, but not limited to, adolescence, I have been blessed to live a life where I have not felt constantly judged by how I look. Yet many people experience such judgment, often based on things beyond their control such as the color of their skin, where they were born, or perceived handicaps. I have been blessed to not have to struggle against such obstacles. Lord, I am grateful!

I have been blessed with a roof over my head, food in my stomach, clothes to wear, a family who loves and supports me, fulfilling work, health, faith, community, and so much more. Though I have never lived at a physical bridge, I have been blessed to live in a place that makes bridges for people to cross over, experience, and know one another. As one comes through the open door of André House, they can also experience an invitation to cross over a bridge towards encounter with another. I have been blessed to live that experience, be changed by it, and carry it with me wherever I go. For that, I am grateful.

Lord, have I been blessed!

Andre House Reflection

by Fr. John Dougherty, CSC



As I look back over almost 22 years of priesthood in Holy Cross I am full of thanks for the many and varied opportunities I have had to minister in a number of different apostolates.

My going to Andre House was not something that I asked to do....rather it was asked of me. At first I was disappointed because I so loved being where I was at....St. Pius the Tenth in Granger, IN. But, I knew that the Lord was asking me to go and I am so glad that I did.

In my early days of priesthood I always thought that I would be more likely to follow the path of administration. It was something that I had a background in and was reasonably effective at doing. But, it was that surprise assignment at Andre House that allowed me to dive deep into pastoral work as a leader. For me Andre House was like a parish...a community of faith that comes together for a common goal. Instead of every one coming on a Sunday they came on 6 different days of the week. Instead of the staff being seasoned pros they were energetic and talented young people. Andre House was our parish and I was privileged to serve as its Pastor/Director for three wonderful years.

My time at Andre House solidified my discernment and calling to be a parish priest and for this I am truly thankful.



Brother Richard and Fr. Tom O'Hara, CSC at the Anniversary Mass



Mr. and Mrs. Bessette (the Nephew of St. Andre Bessette) at the Anniversary Dinner

Andre House Reflection

by Fr. Brent Kruger, CSC



Andre House is a place where one hears the words “Thank you” all the time. From the first moment the gate opens to the last dish washed and dried, people are aware of the gifts that are given and received. The words are not hard to say, yet they convey much. “I appreciate what you are doing,” is the message given and received hundreds of times over throughout the day.

That day purposefully begins with Mass—the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. And Eucharist comes from the Greek word that means to give thanks. “Thanks,” we say, for bathrooms and showers, for lockers and phones, for food and clothing, for blankets and beds. “Thanks” for the energy to do the work that gets done. But most of all, we say “thanks” for one another. At Andre House, humanity is rediscovered in the way everyone is treated, guests and volunteers alike. Anyone can dish up food on a plate, but to give a smile? That is divine. Wiping down tables takes no real skill, but to stop and engage someone in conversation? That is holy. Opening and closing a door was a chore that they gave to the uneducated Br Andre, but he turned it into a mission, the sanctity of which we are still discovering.

Our participation in the holy endeavor of Andre House, sweaty and smelly and hot and sticky and uncomfortable as it often is, is rightly bracketed by the thanks we give, both to God and to one another. Thank you for being part of it.



Thanksgiving Eve Memorial Service

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November is a month of remembrance in the Catholic Church. Because of this, on **Wednesday, November 25th**, 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 a 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 at 7:30pm. See our website, www.andrehouse.org and Facebook page for more details.



Some of the Thursday night crew at the Anniversary Dinner (L to R - Greg Herrle and his wife, Big John Ganem and his wife, Merle making bunny ears, Lou Pratt, Abe Yepiz, guest Poncho)



Some of the Wednesday Night Regulars at the Anniversary Dinner



André House Current Needs List:

Ground Coffee

Frozen Whole Turkeys

Blankets & Sleeping Bags

Backpacks

Jackets & Sweatshirts

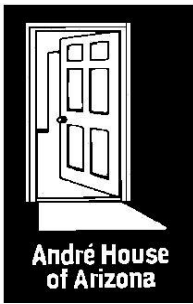
Men and Women's Undergarments (small and medium)

Shoes (sizes 8-12)

Men's Jeans (sizes 28-38)

Hygiene Kits to include: deodorant, travel size - toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, hand lotion, chapstick.

Thank you & God bless!



André House

PO Box 2014
Phoenix, AZ 85001
Phone: 602-252-9023 or 602-255-0580
www.andrehouse.org

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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Occurring this year on December 1, [#GivingTuesday](https://www.givingtuesday.com) is held annually on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving (in the U.S.) and the widely recognized shopping events Black Friday and Cyber Monday to kick-off the holiday giving season and inspire people to collaborate in improving their local communities and to give back in impactful ways to the charities and causes they support.

Please, support Andre House on [#GivingTuesday!](https://www.givingtuesday.com)
Visit our website at: www.andrehouse.org
Facebook: Andre House of Arizona