

THE OPEN DOOR

FROM THE CORE COMMUNITY OF ANDRE HOUSE

SPRING 2018



HANDS OF HOPE *Ruby Briones* 2017 Summer Intern

This mosaic is made up of the hands of volunteers, core staff, and guests. These working hands of Andre House carry out the difficult work of the cross day after day in the practice of the corporeal and spiritual works of mercy. And this work serves its purpose only if its grounded in hope. I also made this mosaic to show how we can often go about our daily lives and miss those who need our help and attention. From afar, these hands look the same but as one begins to pay closer attention, one can see that each pair of hands is different—each belonging to a person, with their own story. We can only see the hands if we pause and pay attention. Founder of Homeboy Industries, Fr. Greg Boyle, says it is in these small acts of turning our attention outward to those in need where, “souls feel their worth, refusing to forget that we belong to each other.”

Life at Andre House is, in some sense, the same every day. The routine can at times lead to ignoring the moments of grace that present themselves before us. The routine can also cause in us a sense of despair since day after day the same amount of suffering presents itself at the door. I encountered the same people every day, served the same meal every week, etc. Yet, each day presented an opportunity to *encounter* and *be with* Christ in a different way - though it appeared to be the same. To see this requires our attention. When we learn to see our lives and our service in this way we begin to see things for what they truly are: seeing things the way Christ sees them, and more importantly, seeing the presence of Christ himself amid our ordinary lives. By neglecting to recognize the presence of Christ in those we serve, we fail to bring to fulfillment the vision of hope that is present in those cross and anchors raised on our gate. This vision, as Greg Boyle says, “still has its time, and, yes it presses on to fulfillment, it will not disappoint. And yet, if it delays, we can surely wait for it.” Every day begins and ends with the same cross and anchors. The hope they represent grounds us and our work. *Ave Crux Spes Unica.*



THE MIDDLE KNUCKLE Fr. Tom Doyle, CSC Director of Andre House

On the middle knuckle of my right hand I have a jagged U-shaped scar. The scar is a result of and reminder of one of the regretted moments in my life.

I catch glimpses of it when I am washing my hands, as I am writing a letter, petting an animal, when I am passing out tickets for meal service at Andre House and when my hands hover over the bread and wine at mass to call forth the gift of the Holy Spirit.

My hand was wounded around the age of ten; it was the very first time that my parents left me in charge to watch my younger brother and two younger sisters. Filled with a sense of authority, I began to boss my siblings. My sisters were displeased but compliant. But my brother, eleven months my junior, wasn't going to be subservient to the new house sheriff. When he refused to fold the laundry as I instructed him, my verbal commands transformed into threats and threats became a wrestling match. I wrestled him to his back with my knees pinning his arms to the ground. My right hand cocked back and let go. My fist landed squarely in his mouth. As I reloaded for another blow, I could see blood covering his lips and his permanent front tooth barely attached to his gum line.

What had I done? How could I have behaved like such a monster? There was irrefutable evidence of my brothers and my own dripping blood on his face. *And on my hand.*

When I am passing out meal tickets to our guests I am fascinated by their hands. Most of them are working hands . . . callused, dirty, bent and scarred from decades of labor. Imagine the stories of sin and grace told by each pair of hands.

At the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest extends his hands and prays that the sacrifice of bread and wine on the altar will be acceptable to God our Father. The congregations respond, "May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of His name . . ." As priest, I am vividly aware that my hands over the sacrifice are profoundly imperfect.

My brother said he forgave me not long after he came home from the hospital. For this I am deeply grateful. Where could he have found such magnanimity?

On Good Friday, we reenact the story of Jesus's crucifixion. His hands were pierced by a nails and he said "Forgive them Father for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34) Jesus' words, spoken 2,000 years ago continue to ask His Father to forgive us, for in sin we do not understand the full implications of what we have done.

So many hands do so much good at Andre House. Last year more than 25,000 hours of volunteer hands were given to services at Andre House. Yours are good hands. But sometimes we cannot forget or get past the pain that our hands have caused. I pray in thanksgiving for the work of your hands at Andre House. And I pray that you can accept the gift of mercy offered by our Father for any pain that your hands may have caused and the hurt that any other's hands have caused you.





MORE THAN A SIMPLE GESTURE *Bishop Bill Wack, CSC Bishop, Pensacola-Tallahassee*

As I waited in line with other “baby bishops” to visit with Pope Francis last September, I felt my heart beating rapidly. I was excited to meet the Vicar of Christ; the Chief Shepherd who appointed me to shepherd the church in the Florida Panhandle. (I really wanted to shake him gently and ask, “What were you thinking?!” but I thought better of it.) Finally, when it was my turn, I panicked. The pope looked at me as if to say, “Hello? Next?” But I just stood there. Finally, I came to my senses, and found myself opening my arms and saying, “Heyyyy! Santo Padre!” To my delight, he opened his arms wide, smiled broadly, and clasped my hands in his. We spoke (in Spanish) for about a minute, all the while holding hands in friendship and communion.

We use our hands for so many things: to greet, to work, to heal, to caress, lift up, to push and pull, to eat and to feed others, etc. Unfortunately, we can also use them to push away, to strike, to hurt and to gesture rudely. When Pope Francis held my hands in his, it was more than a simple gesture; it communicated fraternity, affection, and an invitation for me to extend my hands to others. Francis often talks about the need to “smell like the sheep” or to touch peoples’ wounds. For him these are not merely sayings that are to be repeated in the church; rather they are directions to be taken literally as we encounter our brothers and sisters every day.

At André House, I learned that the Corporal Works of Mercy required all of us to use our hands — and our feet, our hearts and our minds as well. We read in the Letter of St. James: “If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, keep warm and eat well,’ but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it?” (2:15-16). Places like André House make it easy for us to live our faith in a real and tangible way every day.

Although it is not a glamorous thing to do by any stretch of the imagination, helping someone to shower, cleaning every inch of the bathrooms every day, helping a guest who has passed out to get up and get well, lifting countless bags and boxes of clothing, donations, food, and supplies every day, etc.; this is the work that we do at André House. What a blessing it is to serve each other with our hands, heart, and minds! May God continue to bless everyone in the community: our guests, our volunteers, the Core Community and staff, and our neighbors. We are all God’s children, and we see what the Lord Jesus did with children in the Gospel of Mark: “Then Jesus embraced them, and blessed them, placing his hands upon them” (10:16). May we go and do likewise.

mural by Francisco Enuf 15th Ave and Filmore, Phoenix





HANDS

Casey Whitehead

Core Staff

I have five fingers,
Functioning each day,
As best as they can.
Aren't we all doing this,
Being the best version
of ourselves,
In our hearts and souls?
These hands
work physically, to
Organize hangers,
Spray bleach bottles,
Write tax receipts,
Unscrew vitamin bottles.
These hands work spiritually,
As a sign of comfort.
Stability.
Hope.
Prayer.
These hands are here,
To love and serve the Lord.
Amidst a crisis,
Providing a gentle touch,
Loving another
where they are at.
Andre House hands are real.
Holding.
Squeezing.
Punching.
Asking.
Needing.
Andre House uses hands,
To make God known,
Loved,
Served.

WITH INTENTIONALITY Ash Uss Core Staff

"It's cold and flu season." This phrase comes up at least a few times a day, in small talk conversations with people I don't know that well and over the sink of every public restroom I've been to in the last few months. We're supposed to be more thoughtful about washing our hands, using extra soap and warmer water. So I've been trying to make a habit of washing my hands each evening when I get home from a day at Andre House. Some days I'm wiped; I go right to bed or right to the couch to reflect on the day. Other times, when I'm more diligent about this healthy habit, I head to my bathroom sink, pump a few squirts of soap into my palms and I let the hot water pour over my dirty hands.

I recently got back from my spiritual retreat along the beautiful seaside cliffs in Ocean Beach, San Diego. While on retreat, I read Henri Nouwen's, *The Way of the Heart*. I was profoundly touched by something he said about how "we move through life in such a distracted way that we do not even take the time and rest to wonder if any of the things we think, say or do are worth thinking, saying or doing." And as it turns out, this new habit of washing my hands each night has invited me into the process that Henri Nouwen is talking about.

On any given day at Andre House, my hands come into contact with so many different people and things. During morning mass, I hold hands with our small, yet mighty community as we pray together. When someone comes into the Pascente office for the first time, I extend my right hand for a friendly handshake. On my laundry shift, I take my time folding up each pair of underwear and each sock, the way my own mother likes her clothes folded. During my porter shift yesterday, I sewed the straps onto someone's backpack so he could walk to the social security office. The other day, I witnessed a community member stand in the hallway and hold hands with someone who was crying.

The time I spent on retreat opened my heart and mind to the meditative possibility of washing your hands. When I massage the soap over my fingers, I try to visualize the last hand these fingers came into contact with. Was it an evening handshake to a first time volunteer or an hour of holding hands with someone who has given up hope, crying in our parking lot? Were these hands gentle today? Did I throw a peace sign up to someone who cursed me out? Did I use my hands to help shower someone with neuropathy who cannot undress herself? Did my fingers feel the grasp of a pen as I wrote a letter to my family back east? Did my hands comfort a guest who is scared and lonely? Our hands are powerful vessels for expressing love and anger and all things in between. They can connect what we are feeling internally with the world surrounding us - they are feelings made flesh, thoughts manifested in actions.

I'm realizing that in washing my hands, it doesn't hurt to pause and think of what I'm scrubbing away. In the dirt that lingers on my fingernails and the smell of bleach that resides on the pores of my skin are the encounters I have with our guests and volunteers each day. As the water flows over my hands and empties into the drain at the bottom of my sink, I've grown to let go of the weight of all the mistakes I make on a given day. I've learned to release the sorrow from cleaning up feces on someone's leg into my bathroom sink. I've discovered that although letting go is both healthy and essential, no amount of soap or hot water can wholeheartedly diminish the remnants of the people you engage with each day. So I'll keep washing my hands with intentionality. It is cold and flu season, after all.



THE LOVE AT OUR FINGERTIPS

Miranda Groux Core Staff

Our collective hands are beautifully diverse. Our collective hands are firm, fragile, broken, scratched, scarred, severed, soft, withered, weathered, delicate, tattered, tattooed. Our collective hands are grasping, gripping, praying, praising, holding, helping, saving, surviving. Always surviving.

When I think about the ways I survive, I often forget to count my hands. My hands help me get into bed each night and rise each morning. My hands bring food to my mouth and water to my lips. My hands allow me to help others. My hands allow me to be helped by others. The beauty of my hands lies within the miracle of our collective hands. My hands cannot survive without your hands.

While the world can be so harsh on our hands, I do believe our hands come together at Andre House. Our hands come together to cook, our hands come together to pray, our hands come together to share, and our hands come together to love. Through our collective hands coming together, we survive. In our circle, we help those up who have fallen, and we allow ourselves to be picked up when we have fallen. It is a gift to depend on one another.

But our circle is not big enough. We have so many brothers and sisters who do not have hands to hold. We must make it our responsibility and our priority to care for one another. We must challenge ourselves to extend the circle of our hands to others every single day. The love at our fingertips is abundant and ever flowing. Let us use this love to help one another survive.



WOUNDS *Lindsey Myers* Core Staff

She held my hand in her terror. I let her squeeze as hard as she needed. Her lips kept saying she was scared, and her body grasped mine. I grasped back. No one should be alone in fear. No one should be alone, at all.

It was later that I recognized myself in her: vulnerable, scared, needy. It was later that I saw that my return of her clench of my hand was the uniting of our suffering, an openness to the brokenness that resides in both of us. I came to see reality of the words, "What you do to the least of my brothers, you do to me."

Jesus was not placing himself in another's shoes when he muttered this. He was one of those society saw as least. Jesus recognized himself as an outcast; someone who resided on the margins of normal. He died as so. Nailed to a cross deemed as a lawbreaker, wounded. Those who loved him, let him be declared as such. They turned their backs while Jesus suffered.

He had no one holding his hand. Instead, his hands became holes. Who of us have not felt similarly? Who of us have not reached out for a hand, to no avail? Have we not all yelled, "I thirst," in our fear.

I saw myself in her, a human being with wounds. And I held our wounds. As I embraced her, I didn't know I was embracing myself. I didn't know that in befriending her brokenness, I was loving my own.

If only each of us saw the wounds of another, and didn't turn away. But embraced. But remembered our own.

In loving our wounds, we love all who suffer. In loving another's wounds, we love ourselves. We are human beings with holes in our hands. May we clench the hand of another. Maybe we will see our holes are one.





IN GOOD HANDS John Fitzpatrick volunteer

16 years at André House. It sounds like a long time, but it really isn't. There are those I know who have volunteered much longer than I have. I came to it rather late in life at the age of 39. I see the young people, high school and college students as well as the core staff and how dedicated they are so early in life. At that age working with the homeless was the farthest thing from my mind, being more interested in cutting classes, better employment, romance, and of course, money. It shows there is hope for us all.

Having just relocated to Northern California, far away from the big city and summer heat, I fulfilled a long-term plan for retirement. Except for friends, I find I miss little of my former life in Phoenix...except for André House. Each Thursday for the past month that I have been away I've had a sense of loss when I wonder how the Thursday night crew is doing. Is it busy, or slow? Are there challenges, or is everything running smoothly? Who of the regular guests are there and who are not. As I get settled in this new life I realize I can never replace André House.

I miss the friends I volunteered with very much, but I also miss the guests. It is they, especially the regulars in the family (St. Francis) dining room who I have learned the most from. There was Guillermo who came from Mexico to work so he could send money home to his family. When he was injured in an industrial accident, he lost the use of one arm and needed a cane to walk. He was undocumented and limited in the help he could get, making him very dependent on the services at André House. Guillermo was always happy and laughing. He was difficult to understand and spoke an unusual dialect of Spanish which made communication even more challenging. He always seemed to find humor in these obstacles which made it easier for me and the other volunteers. Sadly, he died about seven years ago and I feel fortunate that I was able to visit him one last time in a care facility.

Zack, another regular always had the most awesome attitude. He lost a leg when he was run over by a train after falling asleep on the tracks. Zack slept in his wheelchair on the street, never complaining about his situation, but was industrious and creative about the way he survived. He had this elaborate system of leaving with food for later and having enough blankets and padding to keep him warm and comfortable through the night. Zack was always happy, laughing, and fun to have around even when he was a little too loud and boisterous due to the use of various substances. Still coming but not as often, he has slowed down, but continues to have a sparkle about him.

Peewee (his real name was Gerald, but he went by Peewee on the street) and I got off to a rocky start, but soon developed a warm relationship. He had been shot and lost the use of his legs and one arm. He was also blind in one eye. He would come regularly, but often be absent for an extended period.. Sometimes it was the result of time in jail on drug charges and sometimes he was able to find temporary housing. There were other times when he was not allowed at André House because of past behavior. Peewee was not always easy to get along with, but like Guillermo and Zack, Peewee had this odd sense of humor that I was able to click with that not only made things easier, but fun as well. I had not seen Peewee for about a year when one of the other guests told me he had died. I felt a sadness not only for the loss, but like so many other guests, there was no funeral or memorial, just a memory.

These memories I have of Guillermo, Zack, Peewee and so many others have been a major source of enrichment and will always be part of me for the rest of my years. That says a lot for people, the rest of society would rather not give any notice to. I realize giving is about helping myself. As I look forward to the next chapter of my life, I am grateful beyond words for my time at André House. I will miss so many people, but there are a few I must mention. Bob Hungerford who first trained me on Thursday nights. He was a mentor and good friend with an amazing outlook on life and I learned a great deal from him. And most of all, Wendy Patterson who with Wendy Neideck, continue the Thursday night operation of the St. Francis dining room. It was difficult to say goodbye to them, *but I am at ease knowing everything is being left in good hands.*



HOLY WEEK and EASTER at ANDRE HOUSE

HOLY THURSDAY MARCH 29th, 2018

CELEBRATION of the LORD'S SUPPER Andre House 9:30AM

We will begin the day with the Mass of the Lord's Supper. This will be the only Mass celebrated on Holy Thursday.

WASHING of the FEET Andre House 4:30PM—6:30PM

In remembrance of the humble act of Jesus and his call to humble servitude, each Holy Thursday the Andre House community gathers and washes the feet of our guests. Before and during the nightly dinner service we invite our guests to have their feet washed. Those who chose to participate will sit down and remove their shoes and socks. We will wash their feet in a basin of warm soapy water, dry them, apply lotion and/or foot powder and provide a warm pair of socks. This is an intimate moment where we have a unique opportunity to serve our guests by taking care of their tired feet. Visit www.andrehouse.volunteerhub.com to sign up.

GOOD FRIDAY MARCH 30th, 2018

STATIONS of the CROSS Downtown State Capital Parking Lot 5:30PM

Please meet at the State Capital Parking lot on 17th Ave at 5:30PM. Beginning at the Arizona State Capital, the Cross is carried through downtown Phoenix, in an area commonly known as "The Zone", a present day Calvary for many. Along the way stops are made at many places that provide services for people experiencing poverty and homelessness, including CASS (the county shelter), the Lodestar Day Resource Center, St Vincent de Paul, the Human Services Campus and of course Andre House. Stops are also made at various government entities. At each Station we reflect on Jesus' road to crucifixion and pray for justice and peace in the world.

A SIMPLE DINNER at Brother Richard House, 1203 W Polk, will follow the Stations of the Cross.

EASTER SUNDAY APRIL 1st, 2018

MASS - 11AM

Brother Richard House 1203 W Polk

Potluck Brunch - NOON





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Making God
Known,
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And
Served