

NEWS.

Monday Morning Mercy / Issue 12 / MAY 5



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Residing in our Phoenix Dining Room is a perfect replica the world-famous Pieta, one of Michelangelo's most beautiful works. The Pieta was installed there through the gift of a donor. It's a powerful sculpture that provides peace and comfort for our guests as they take a moment to pray in the chapel. As I think about the Pieta, I remember a special individual, a young man named John, who was helped by our "Going Home Program." This program helps people who are stranded here in Phoenix but have families or friends elsewhere in the state or throughout the country who will take them in and shower them with love.

I met John on a Monday morning. Our breakfast service was nearly over. I had lingered a bit to give our volunteers and guests an opportunity to spend some time with the Pieta. On my way out, I noticed a young man, a boy really, sitting at one of our tables by himself. He looked very young, very vulnerable, and very scared. If he was homeless, he clearly hadn't been on the streets for long. He looked about the same age as my teenage son at home. On another day I may have been too busy to stop, but today, inspired by the spiritual power of our Blessed Mother holding her son in her arms, I sat down next to the young man, the boy, and said hello.

I learned that his name was John. That he was homeless. He was polite. He had spent the previous night in the overflow shelter. He had a family, but there were problems. His father was struggling with alcohol. His mom had a new boyfriend who was not interested in him. He had nowhere to go. I thought about the beauty of the Pieta, the expression of the deep love that a mother has for her son. It was something that John hadn't experienced in a long time, maybe ever.

I learned that he did have friends who would take him in, a family that would care for him, but they were in New York. He just needed to get to New York. Fortunately, with the help of our volunteers who run the Going Home Program and one small bus ticket, we were able to help John get to a place where he would be loved. Within 24 hours, John was on a bus, on an odyssey to his new home and a new beginning.

This is just one story of one young man who was helped at St. Vincent de Paul over the past year, but there are so many more. I am convinced that while St. Vincent de Paul provides the critical food, clothing, housing, healthcare and even transportation that our homeless and working poor individuals and families need, perhaps the most important thing we provide is LOVE, a warm embrace. Our donors and volunteers make that love and that embrace possible. There truly aren't any words to express how grateful we are. To them. And to you. Perhaps instead, imagine John stepping off the bus in New York and stepping into the warm embrace of those who love him, and it will come close. On John's behalf, we say "Thank you."

—Steve Zabilski, Executive Director of St. Vincent de Paul

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- See more at: <https://www.stvincentdepaul.net/svdp-blog/monday-morning-mercy-sympathy-for-the-stranded#sthash.Xa3XOSbp.dpuf>