

The Dirty Bagel

Thanksgiving and Christmas will soon be upon us. Traditionally this is not only a time to enjoy family and friends, but it is also time to remember folks who are in need. Let me share with you a story that reminds us of the importance of caring for others.

Once, not so long ago, a successful businessman was on his way to work one morning when he stopped to get coffee and a bagel. He paid for his purchase and dashed out of the store with his thoughts on an important meeting that he had later in the day. He was in such a hurry that he tripped, spilling his coffee all over his suit and dropping his bagel in the dirt.



Just then a homeless man approached him. "Excuse me, sir," he said, "I'm really hungry. Could you spare a couple of bucks so that I can buy some coffee and a bagel?"

"Your timing stinks," said the businessman. "You want something to eat? Here! You can have the rest of my coffee and that bagel I just dropped in the dirt." And with that he got in his car and drove away.

That night the businessman had an unusual dream. In his dream, he sat in an expensive restaurant. The waiters were very attentive to the other customers, bringing them wonderful appetizers, delicious entrees and fantastic desserts, but they completely ignored him. At last, furious, he shouted for service, but all he was given was a dirty bagel and half a cup of coffee.

"Don't you know who I am?" he roared, berating the waiter. "I'm the CEO of a very successful company. I make more money in one day than you make in a year. How dare you treat me this way? Bring me the best you have! And money is no object!"

"I'm sorry, sir," the waiter politely replied. "Much though I'd like to help you, your money and your power are no good to you here. This is Heaven, and here you can only eat what you, yourself, have sent ahead during your time on earth. Unfortunately, you only sent this dirty bagel and a half a cup of coffee, and I'm afraid that's all I can give you."

(Adapted from a Jewish folk tale.)

God calls us to care for the poor and needy throughout our life. It is so easy to get distracted by our busyness, self-importance or the other priorities of life. But these are no excuses. At this time of year we remember with thanksgiving all that God has done for us. Let's turn our thanksgiving into action by caring for those around us.

In Christ's love,