



We Have A Table For 4 Ready: The Story of St. Francis Inn

(Broadcast 58:20)

Introduction:

This video is both inviting and haunting.

It invites us into the world of a joyful community in the midst of urban poverty. It transports us through the seemingly unattractive landscape of need into a world that experiences the paradox of the Gospel: those who lose their lives for the sake of the Gospel find their lives. The friars, sisters and volunteers who choose to live and work among some of America's poorest people, find a life that includes deep meaning and great joy. They live and work there because they have found something. We are invited into that perspective by viewing the video and reflecting on the Gospel paradox in our own lives.

But the video also haunts us who have so much to wonder whether we are truly living life to the fullest. The video takes us into some dark and desperate places. It challenges us to visit the tombs within ourselves, to notice the ways which the crucified one can bring life and light into those dark places where before we had little hope. It haunts us who have so much, goading us to reflect on the questions that it poses: Why do some have so much and others so little? Why is life not fair?

The video hosts us as we pursue these questions. It does so with the simplicity and care that the hosts extend to the guests of St. Francis and the ministries associated with hospitality. In turn, we, the viewers, are the invited guests at the home of the poor, through whom we encounter our own need as well as a wealth beyond external measures.

This video will help church groups, school leaders, catechists and those who work in various ministries of justice and service to reflect on the situation of hunger and homelessness in America. It will open the eyes of viewers to the ways in which the Christian meets Christ by becoming like him, by finding in the faces and the stories of the poor traces of evidence that the kingdom of God is in our midst.

After viewing:

Take some time to reflect with others about the impact that the film had on you. You may want to do this with just one other person, with a group of four or five persons, or in a larger group, depending upon time and circumstances.

- 1) If you could freeze one frame and keep it as a photograph, what frame would you choose? WHY do you think you would choose that one?
- 2) What feelings did you experience as you viewed the video?

- 3) What questions did the video spark inside you?
- 4) The video begins with church bells sounding in the background. Traditionally church bells have called people to prayer. What kinds of prayer does the video call forth in you?
- 5) The community of St. Francis Inn seems to include everyone. In what ways does that sense of inclusion challenge your community, or parish, or family to include others? Which others? What would you need to do to make this happen?
- 6) What kinds of questions must we as a group keep on asking as a result of this film? What kinds of hope can we nurture in each other as a result of viewing this film?
- 7) Is the quality of the relationships shown in the video possible for other groups of committed Christians? What essential elements of the relationships shown in the video would you hope would characterize the relationships in your family; church group; parish; community?



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