

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

There seems to be no end to the natural disasters filling the headlines these days: hurricanes, earthquakes and wild fires claiming lives and whole neighborhoods - and robbing thousands of the security of those things we so easily take for granted until they are suddenly snatched from our grasp.

I'm sure many of you have made contributions to various relief organizations but for those who might be looking for a way to support their neighbors in other parts of the country, we're offering you the opportunity to buy a "house in a box."

What's a house in a box? The national leadership of the St. Vincent de Paul Society responds to local disaster relief efforts by offering kits for households ranging in size from 4-10 members. The kits include the basics which includes easy to assemble beds, a kitchen table & chairs, pots & pans, dishes, glassware, silverware, bedding, towels, linens and more. (Think *Bed, Bath and Beyond!*) It's a starter kit for families in need of those basic supplies that every home needs.

(Many parishes, including Holy Family, have a local St. Vincent de Paul Society. This group reaches out to the needs of others right here in our own community. You might be amazed to know how much in need are many households right here in Concord. Parish based St. Vincent groups like our own limit their mission to the immediate locale. The "house in a box" effort is managed by Vincentians at the national level.)

Next weekend we'll have baskets at the church doors so that you can make a contribution for our parish to provide a "house in a box" for a family in the US whose lives have been shaken by the elements. The price tag on a house in a box for 4 persons is \$2,500. I hope we can raise at least that much over the course of next weekend's four Masses. So, come prepared to give (or send a contribution to the parish office at Holy Family Parish - P.O. Box 220 - Concord, MA 01742). This is your opportunity to be *Bed, Bath and Beyond* for a family in need!

We pray every week in the intercessions "for a spirit of generosity in the hearts of us who have more than we need..." Most of us in Concord fall into this majority category and as I said in my homily last Sunday, "The fact that we often want more and more doesn't necessarily mean that we need any more than we already possess." We're approaching "the holidays" and that means many will be asking for our help as Thanksgiving and Christmas draw near. I pray that we'll all find within ourselves a "spirit of generosity" that leads us to give not just from our surplus but even from our want - to give until we feel the pinch of giving.

This Sunday at the 10:30 Mass we'll be praying with and for some of the 6th graders in our faith formation program. We'll present them with bibles and they'll be at the church doors handing out cards to help all of us remember the importance of the scriptures in our lives. In the weeks and months to come we'll be welcoming other grade level children to share in a special way in our Sunday celebrations. As the prophet Isaiah foretold: *And a little child shall lead them... (Isaiah 11:6)*

And to close, here are 21 two-word prayers from my blog: Calm me, quiet me, settle me... Steady me, balance me, ground me... Plant me, root me, embed me... Support me, sustain me, protect me... Forgive me, pardon me, free me... Refresh me, restore me, heal me... Enfold me, embrace me, hold me... *Lord, hear my prayer today!*

Sincerely,
Fr. Fleming