



## God's Gift to Us

Advent is the season when we prepare our house for the coming of Christ. It is He who wants to visit and offer to us the most incredible gift, God Himself. He is Beauty, Peace, Freedom, Happiness and Joy; in short Love. He doesn't make any distinction to whom He gives this gift and He waits patiently for us to accept it. Moreover, He gives us time to decide freely if we want to have Him in our home or not.

My experiences of living and working in different countries, some of them very poor, and of learning new languages and cultures has deepened my love for the Catholic Church. It has also increased my understanding of human nature and my desire to serve God's people. The word Catholic means universal and the message of Christ is universal. My family and I have been blessed to experience firsthand our "Universal Church". We look forward to the opportunity to serve and live in our "Diocese of La Crosse Church".

In working with those in need, Christ allows us to experience suffering and offers us the opportunity to grow closer to Him; to become more dependent on His mercy. If we are serious about our lives and our faith, we can quickly see that our goal should be to "be His instruments", to use the talents He has given us to help bring His message of Love, Faith and Hope to all.

As members of the "Human Family", we have a responsibility to help those who are discouraged; those who have fallen into hard times and feel that nobody cares. Catholic Charities cares! With help from those who wish to share their talents with our less fortunate brothers and sisters, we can alleviate suffering in our community one person at the time. Our mission is to proclaim Christ's Gospel of life, promote human dignity and alleviate poverty by strengthening the family and the individual. We can achieve this by working together as a community. A great example is the new Warming Center which recently expanded to Third Street in La Crosse. It is serving more than 35 people every night; offering a warm meal, a hot shower and a safe place to get in out of the cold. It's a good start, but we still have plenty of work ahead of us and with God...all things are possible.

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