



CATHOLIC
CHARITIES
of St. Paul and Minneapolis

On Our Lenten Journey

DVD SUMMARY

Lent. It is a time of our liturgical year where we're called to prayer, fasting, and mercy. The On Our Lenten Journey reflection is designed to provide opportunity to reflect on circumstances that call for our mercy toward others and God's mercy toward us.

To that end, in addition to the Gospel readings and reflection questions, weeks two through five include video depicting real-life conditions for people living in poverty and crisis here in the Twin Cities. Let our hearts and minds be open as we view the videos and prayerfully reflect on our own perceptions and reactions with mercy.

WEEK TWO

This video features two young dads, growing up in poverty and isolation without fathers of their own as role models. With the support of the Dad's Connection program at Catholic Charities' Seton Services, they receive counseling and supportive services such as parenting classes, peer groups, mentoring, and home visits to help them learn to support their families.

WEEK THREE

More than 5000 people in the Twin Cities are homeless on any given night. The video features the process of determining who gets a shelter "bed" at two local shelters, shows us the shelter conditions, and tells the stories of men facing homelessness. Additionally, John Petroskas, a Catholic Charities associate whose work focuses on housing men classified as "long term homeless," shares the difficulties of finding shelter and the underlying issues contributing to homelessness in our community.

WEEK FOUR

We often think of some people who are poor as "deserving" of our support and some as "undeserving". Catholic Charities' St. Anthony Residence provides permanent housing for late-stage chronic alcoholics in Ramsey County who have had repeated admissions to detoxification centers and a history of failure in traditional chemical dependency treatment programs. The site provides residential care in a homelike environment.

WEEK FIVE

KSTP Channel 5 covered the story of Sara Gonzalez Avendano, an immigrant woman and mother of six living in the Twin Cities. Initially Sara overstayed her visitor visa after falling in love. Subsequently she married and had six children. Fifteen years later she was deported to the Mexican border for having violated her immigration status. The video depicts the struggle for Sara and her family. Not covered in the video is the fact that because of the health of one of her sons, Sara was granted a humanitarian visa in 2007, which was renewed for another year in 2008. She was scheduled to be escorted back to Mexico after her visa expired in December of 2009, but was just granted another one year extension of this visa. The video portrays how a broken immigration system negatively impacts families in our own community.