

Mercy Seekers

“...Go and find out the meaning of mercy.” Mt. 9:13

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MARY'S MERCY CENTER, INC.

Mary's Table – Veronica's Home of Mercy

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A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR FATHER MICHAEL BARRY, SS.CC.

February IS the shortest month of the year but it is still a month of intense activity here at Mary's Mercy Center and Mary's Table. February is the month of the Presidents' birthdays. It is the month of Valentine's Day; it is the month of the beginning of Lent (Ash Wednesday); and finally, February this year has an extra day (leap year). What does all of this have to do with Mary's Mercy Center?

February is usually a cold, rainy month, and it means that our people will be cold and need more clothes and also more warm food. February has the clients talking about who their Valentine may be and then, because it is a leap year, there is one extra day of feeding.

You are a vital part of Mary's Mercy Center. There are many miracles that happen here daily, whether the month is short or long. God's people, our brothers and sisters are fed and cared for. They bring their presence and challenge us to be gospel to them and to one another. As Ash Wednesday and Lent approach, it would be nice to continue to reach out to the poor and marginalized (blessed are the poor) and also to keep the prayer support going for us.

—Fr. Mike

SAVE THE DATE!

Our volunteer appreciation luncheon is coming up soon! It is scheduled for April 29; mark your calendar and plan to attend this celebration of the wonderful people who volunteer their time and energy to help the guests of Mary's Mercy Center.



SHOES FOR DAMON

There are people in this world who act as angels. One lady, who prefers to remain anonymous, makes it her mission to obtain for us items that are needed by our guests but would never come as a regular donation. Damon, one of our guests had been wearing shoes that were too small for some time. While shoes are donated with some regularity, we have never received the size 16 shoes he needed. Our angel worked with the good people at Nike, and Damon was gifted with new shoes. He was excited to receive the beautiful new shoes. Next we hope to find a 4X jacket for Damon, who, despite the cold weather, has been making do with a sweat jacket.

BEYOND 40 DAYS:THE PROGRESS OF YOUR SPIRITUAL ADOPTEE

Weeks 37 to 40

By the end of week 37, baby is considered full term. In the past, gaining about a half-pound a week was normal, but now growth slows to an ounce or so a week. This is good, because although baby is still squirming the quarters are increasingly crowded. About two weeks before birth, the placenta starts to deteriorate. It becomes less efficient in transferring nutrition. This vital and short-lived organ is reaching the end of its life span. Until recently, baby has relied on her mother for immunities against infections, but in the past few weeks, her own immune system has begun to develop. This process will continue after birth, and can be helped along by encouraging the baby to breast-feed; breast milk is full of immunity-building benefits which can impact baby well into adulthood.

Only five percent of babies are born on their due date so your spiritual adoptee could arrive at any time, or she may decide to linger in her cozy home up to two more weeks. The average full-term newborn weighs between 6 and 9 pounds and is 18 to 21 inches long. A full-term baby can display more than 70 different reflexes; these automatic and unlearned behaviors are needed for survival. One such behavior is crying. At the time of birth, the baby has a total of 300 bones. Some of these bones will fuse together as the baby grows; adults have a total of 206 bones. She is fearfully and wonderfully made.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BABY! Please don't let your prayers stop at the birth of your spiritual adoptee. You've prayed for the little one through a crisis pregnancy. Realize the crisis can worsen as the care of your adoptee is no longer automatic. Your adoptee now has physical, spiritual and emotional needs to be met. Continue to hold your spiritual adoptee up in prayer. Prayers will be your gifts to your spiritual adoptee for all the holidays and birthdays ahead for this precious child of God.

DID YOU KNOW?

In December 2011 Mary's Mercy Center, through its Mary's Table and Mary's Children, provided the following services:

Meals served: 8,291

Food Bags: 1,405 (represents 3,995 individuals)

Showers (including a change of clothes): 288

Haircuts: 15

Hygiene kits: 77 (in addition to the 1,000 given out at our Christmas event)

Clothing (2-4 outfits and shoes): 95 individuals, (40 emergencies — CPS, interview preparation, parolees, etc.)

Children's Program: 50 infant needs (diapers, wipes and formula) were met. We also gave out 200 pounds of clothing, 2 car seats, 1 crib with mattress, 3 strollers, and 18 cases of diapers



MAKING ROOM

We hope that in the not too distant future we will be able to help more single women with young children. The original Veronica's Home of Mercy has been closed undergoing some remodeling. It started with a new roof. God granted us great weather and roof was completed before the rains started. The work on the interior is progressing with some new drywall, doors, flooring and a new kitchen! We are also doing some work in the yard as we want the little ones to have a fun and safe place to play.

SAD STATISTICS

The typical homeless parent is a poor, unemployed, single woman in her twenties with, on average, two children. Over 95% of homeless parents are women. 70% of homeless women report a history of childhood emotional, physical and sexual abuse and 63% report experiencing violence as adults. In 2001, intimate partners committed approximately 20% of all violent crimes against women. Again, women in their twenties are more likely to be victims. The scope of intimate partner violence is significant enough that it has its own acronym, IPV. Making things worse — women experiencing IPV tend to have poor rental, credit and employment histories because of their partners' abusive behaviors, and because IPV often leads to loud noise, property damage, and police visits to the home, further reducing the ability to secure affordable permanent housing is reduced further.

Just think how wonderful it is that Veronica's Home of Mercy exists: a place where some women are able to take refuge from homelessness and abuse. I say "some" because just today while putting this article together two women called; one was pregnant and the other had a 3-month-old, and we could not help because VHM was at capacity. That was the sad news... the good news is VHM *does* exist, it helps women with children develop the skills necessary to live an independent life free of IPV.

Return service requested

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We are a non-profit public benefit corporation and organized exclusively for charitable, religious and educational purposes.

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NEWS FROM VERONICA'S HOME OF MERCY

January 22, 2012 — Crystal and Elizabeth were guests at Saint Frances Cabrini in Yucaipa. The parishioners held a birthday party for the babies living at VHM. Thanks to the response to this event, VHM received baby blankets, clothing, pampers, hygiene products, and toys. We thank all who participated for their generosity.

In mid January, Claudia, Silvia, Jeanine, Rhonda, and Libby accompanied Fr. Barry (pictured below left) to Saint Elizabeth Ann Seaton in Rowland Heights. These women answered questions concerning the VHM Ministry after the masses. The kindness and generosity of the pastor and parishioners was appreciated.



Veronica's Home of Mercy would like to thank:

- St Margaret Mary Women's Fellowship Spiritual Sisterly Adoption for leading residents in a monthly rosary and fellowship with a brown bag lunch.
- Sister Betty Mc Govern for her "Prayer Time" when she leads a prayer group and then prays one on one with members for each one's specific needs.
- STONECROFT MINISTRIES holds a bi-monthly non-denominational Bible Study and fellowship titled "Women's Connection."

The effort, time and talent put forth by these organizations and individuals help the participating residents connect with God and each other. In turn, it also helps them strengthen their relationship with their families and most importantly, their children.