

Clothe The Naked

"For I was naked and you clothed me." (Matthew 25:35)



This society pretends to cover its evils with a wardrobe of materialism, secularism, modernism, feminism, sodomy, and other paths to perdition. In the spirit of *The Emperor's New Clothes* everyone marvels at the superficial trappings of this wardrobe in both the secular and ecclesiastical sectors while ignoring the absurd spiritual nudity and moral nakedness that we all exhibit from time to time. True social justice is not just about throwing some clothes on the physically naked, but rather in striving to dress ourselves in the purest garments as often as we can such that we will be ready for the Groom's arrival. What good do the finest, most expensive clothes do when they cover the vile leftover of sin? What good is accomplished by clothing hundreds and thousands of lost souls without likewise providing them with the chance to wear the garments etched by the Eternal Tailor?

Younger siblings know well the "blessings" of hand-me-downs. Even if not exact fits, at least they have clothes and shoes. Countless children and adults in the world would walk barefooted and have little to wear, except for donations of usable clothing. Nor would they have household items such as towels, blankets and bed linens. To them, the "pre-owned" goods are true blessings.

Catholic social teaching also considers the naked as "those stripped of human dignity and power . . . and necessary tools for work." (*The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*.) The rights of human beings to dignity, the power to control their own lives, and even to work, are God given. Our moral responsibility is to preserve and protect those rights.

As God's hands on Earth, we can help to clothe and unburden the needy.

Here are some suggestions:

- Support and donate to drives run by schools, parishes and other charitable organizations that collect clothes and
- Bedding for the local needy
- Organize programs to provide towels and bed linens for hospitals that lack these essentials in distressed areas, particularly in developing nations.
- Act in solidarity to aid sister parishes in areas devastated by tornadoes, floods, earthquakes and hurricanes, leaving residents with virtually nothing. (See video: *Mano-con-Mano (Hand-to-Hand): Stories of Solidarity*: www.maryknollmall.org)
- Reach out to neighbors who have lost their possessions in fires, floods or in other ways.
- Encourage someone whose dignity may have become fragile due to loss of a job. Suggest retraining in a new area of work, or help them seek work if you are in a position to do so.
- Be charitable, but always remember that in giving it is most important to maintain a person's sense of dignity; no one ever should be made to feel like a "charity case."
- Give "gently used" clothing to "Threads of Hope" for resale.

Few people are literally naked, but millions of people own no more clothing than what they wear each day. If you search your closet and your heart, you may discover that you have more than you need. You can lend something to a friend for a special occasion. You can also restrain yourself from an unnecessary purchase and give the money to an agency that helps people in need of clothing.