Dear Benefactors,

Whatever You Did for the Least of These …

We can speak in general terms about people; for example, we talk of the poor, the homeless, the refugee, the hungry. While doing so is often necessary, there is a risk of losing sight of the individual— the person with a story and family and feelings. Many years ago, Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada sponsored an exhibit at the Reno City Hall. It showed pictures of people Catholic Charities served at St. Vincent’s Dining Room and the Food Pantry. An artist had taken these photos with the consent of their subjects. His intent was to introduce each person to others. The poor, the hungry, homeless: they are not faceless or invisible. They are people like you and me. Each portrait brought out the unique features of a person and the humanity that we share.

An article in this edition of the High Desert Catholic features a work by the artist Timothy Schmalz. It is a life-size sculpture of someone covered with a blanket sprawled out asleep on a park bench. It is a scene encountered in many urban settings of people who inhabit our streets all seasons of the year. While the identity of the person is unknown—it could be anyone—the sculptor gives him a name: “Homeless Jesus”. The name comes not from his own inspiration but from the Gospel, namely, Chapter 25 of Matthew.

We are familiar with this Gospel passage. It is a parable told by Jesus and one of judgment. What Jesus does is give an identity to people who could easily be rendered nameless, faceless or invisible in society. He gives them his own identity. He identifies with the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the sick, the incarcerated—people in need. What he says about our interaction with them is stunning: how we respond to them is equivalent to how we would treat him. If we are indifferent to the homeless, then we are indifferent to Jesus. If we do not care about those in need, then we do not care about Jesus. It’s a strong point he makes, one hard to rationalize away. His words a fully formed Christian conscience cannot ignore. Whatever you did for one of these least of my brethren, you did for me.”

May you have a grace-filled Advent Season as you prepare for the celebration of the birth of the Christ Child. I will be happy to include your intentions in my Masses and prayers in this holy Season. You need to only return the enclosed petition sheet. Merry Christmas! May God bless you abundantly for your continued support of our work by your prayers and your support of the Diocese of Reno. You are remembered daily at Mass.

Once again, we have Christmas Cards available for your use, which includes a special remembrance in the Novena of Masses being offered. The cards are free for you, please see the reverse side of this letter to see a picture of this year’s card. Just indicate the number of cards you would like to receive and we will mail them to you immediately. If you would like to receive your cards sooner you may call 775-326-9433 or 775-326-9411 or send an email to carmeng@catholicreno.org or carlam@catholicreno.org.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Randolph R. Calvo
Bishop of Reno
Looking for a unique and meaningful Christmas card? Remember friends and family with a Novena this Christmas. *Silent Stars* is a depiction of the Holy Family on Christmas. This card was designed by the Sisters of Carmel here in Reno, Nevada.

These cards are free for you. Please let us know how many you wish us to send to you and who you want to be remembered for the Novena Prayer from Dec. 17th - 25th.

From all of us here at the Diocese of Reno, we hope that you have a blessed Advent and Christmas seasons.

*Merry Christmas!*

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Left Side:

In prayerful remembrance, I have requested that you and your loved ones receive a special remembrance at the Novena of Masses to be celebrated by the Most Rev. Phillip F. Straling, Bishop Emeritus of Reno.

Right Side:

May your Christmas be filled with love and blessed with peace.