

Worcester Nonprofit Celebrates 40 Years of Bringing Christmas Joy to Local Children in Need by Loving Its Neighbor as Itself

Urban Missionaries of Our Lady of Hope marks the 40-year anniversary of its Christmas Giving Program with an extraordinary challenge

WORCESTER, Mass., Nov. 29, 2023 – With Christmas fast approaching, Urban Missionaries of Our Lady of Hope, a Worcester-based Catholic nonprofit is thrilled to celebrate the 40th anniversary of one of its hallmark programs. Each year, with the help of over 150 volunteers, several Central Massachusetts churches and small businesses and many individuals, its Christmas Giving Program provides new winter coats and thousands of new Christmas gifts to impoverished children in the area. And this year is no exception...except for the additional funding challenge that Deacon Walter Doyle -- the nonprofit's co-founder along with his wife, Kathy Doyle -- embraced. Despite the unstable economy and the risk of inadequate funding for the Christmas program, the nonprofit is hoping to raise \$20,000 for a family it's serving through the Christmas program. It's a two-parent family with five kids and triplets on the way.

Deacon Doyle noted that the Christmas Giving Program is vital to the families it serves. He said, "Over the years, we have had recipients of the Christmas Giving Program come back after Christmas and tell us what nice things their children received or how the gifts were the only ones their children received..."

And with the figures released by the U.S. Census Bureau on Sept. 12, it's not surprising that the number of families signing up for the program has increased compared to this time last year. The U.S. child poverty rate more than doubled to 12.4 percent in 2022 from 5.2 percent in 2021.

In the latest issue of "Streetlights," the nonprofit's newsletter, Deacon Doyle recalled meeting the local mom who's expecting triplets. He mentioned the tender, joyful exchange they had. But he also recalled the fundraiser's inspiration. "After she left, there was something nagging at me," he wrote. "All day, into the evening, and it was still there after I woke up the next day. How is this family going to survive?"

People who would like to support the nonprofit's Christmas Giving Program or its GoFundMe campaign for the family expecting triplets can learn how they can help by visiting the nonprofit's website at urbanmissionaries.com.

About Urban Missionaries of Our Lady of Hope

Founded in 1979 by Deacon Walter Doyle and his wife, Kathy Doyle, and run by the Doyles and General Manager Charley O'Neill, Urban Missionaries of Our Lady of Hope is a Catholic social action ministry that primarily serves low-income residents of Worcester and newly arrived refugees and immigrants who need help becoming citizens, learning English, and becoming settled. In addition to its Christmas Giving Program, the nonprofit's programs include two food pantries, a Thanksgiving dinner baskets initiative, an immigrant housing initiative, a thrift store, citizenship aid, ESL tutoring and more.

###

Link to Special GoFundMe

<https://gofund.me/3325fa79>