

Martin De Porres House of Hospitality

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September 1989

Dear Friends:

Greetings. Each day we are carrying on with our work. While the summer has brought homelessness to the front pages of our newspapers, we have continued each day to greet our guests with hot food and a peaceful place to rest for a few hours.

The strength of our work lies in its repetition. Every day the pots get dirty, and every day they get scrubbed and stacked, ready for another go round. The repetition, each day, is a meditation that ritualizes our work together.

Sometimes we break from daily routine with special food or special events. On July 4th we were able to serve hot dogs to our guests. Occasionally we have Sunday afternoons of live music and popcorn. Sometimes we get treats like ice cream, or we plan an outing for our guests to attend a baseball game. We provide showers and clothing. Each new task or special item that we serve challenges us to stay connected with the true work of Martin's: to nurture the bodies and spirits of those who come here.

And so we return again to the repeated, simple daily tasks: chopping onions, washing pots, mopping floors.

The work of Martin's is not about changing the world. The work of Martin's is about acceptance; acceptance of love and great bounty as well as suffering and great pain. The simplicity of our work, the soup and the bread and its steady repetition day after day, is the mainstay of our practice. In the simple repetition we can stay focused on ourselves, on seeing the ways in which each of us suffers. This is the real hope for changing the world, each one of us, seedlings reaching for the light.

May the summer's abundance and light have touched each of you --

In love and faith,



Anne, for the
Martin de Porres community