

Martin de Porres House of Hospitality

225 Potrero Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94103
Telephone (415) 552-0240

Spring 1992

Our Dearest Friends:

I must begin this letter with much appreciation for the response to our November newsletter. Your overwhelming support and generosity were beautiful. It is not rhetoric to say that we need your prayers; as a community we find your loving messages and letters moving. The understanding that was expressed and the thoughtfulness put into each letter made much of the pain we went through worth the struggle.

I am happy to say that things are going much better. Our schedule did not change as much as we had anticipated. We have dropped one breakfast (on Wednesday morning), and we have turned Tuesday lunch into a special services day, with showers, medical personnel, haircuts, eyeglasses and shoes programs, as well as an assortment of things we can do on a one to one basis that we are not able to do every day. We also serve a simple broth/bread/fruit on Tuesday for those that come after our breakfast.

What we learned through a lot of trials and errors was that we were not going to alleviate all suffering, but that we can do what we do best, that is to be a presence of love and compassion within our human limitations.

No one of us escapes the clutches of suffering. Yet for some of our brothers and sisters the path of suffering is severe and the cross heavy. Yet suffering can be a great opportunity, even at times a blessing in disguise. Our pain can bear fruit. The value of suffering does not lie in the pain of it, but in what the sufferer and the community makes of it. The real tragedy is not that we suffer, but that we sometimes waste suffering, waste the opportunity to grow, to have our souls purified and our character transformed through suffering.

At Martin's the suffering of last year helped us to see ourselves in a new light, to be reborn to the reason we work here. We have seen our relationship to our guests anew, and are able once again to see the face of God in each other's eyes and hearts. Many barriers we had built up have come down and we have been united once again.

We saw the death this year of four of our guests: Joey, Marvin, Lee, and Herbie. We also saw the death of our oldest volunteer, Mary Mulligan, who had been with us for the last 15 years. We feel so blessed by the presence of these people who shared their lives with us and now guide us from the other side. Death brings us together as nothing else. Our differences vanish and all the disruptive factors which may have existed between people up to that day are scorched out of existence.

As we approach the season of rebirth, spring, Passover and Easter, we at Martin's look forward to a continued renewal of this wonderful family where we know we all belong, a sense of acceptance and unconditional love where our faith will be continually tested. Together and with the Grace of God we will continue to be reborn again and again.

In God's Light,



Barbara Collier

for the Martin de Porres Community

"LOVE OTHERS AS GOD LOVES YOU."

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