

"It's best not to hope."

That bleak statement is at the heart of Linda Tirado's widely-discussed *Huffington Post* essay, "This Is Why Poor People's Decisions Make Perfect Sense." Tirado offers an insider's view on the mindset of people trapped in poverty. When they are "too tired to walk one more step," she says, they may turn to smoking as a stimulant. They may "blow five bucks at Wendy's" to find "small pleasures" in a life that affords few larger ones. They may even have children by different fathers who, in her words, "make you feel lovely for an hour that one time, and that's all you get." In short, Tirado concludes, the poor may "make what look from the outside like awful decisions" because planning for the future has so often proven frustrating to them that it seems futile even to try.

POPE FRANCIS: SELL YOUR DESK

Pope Francis recently told Catholics that we should not rely on occasional acts of charity, nor on public agencies alone, to improve the lot of poor people like Linda Tirado. Instead, we are called "to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them."

To set an example, he ordered the Vatican's charity officer to sell his desk and to seek out the poor on the streets of Rome. That official, in turn, gave his colleagues detailed instructions on how the pope expected them to treat street beggars: "Take this poor person, bring him to your big apartment that has three bathrooms, let him take a shower - and your bathroom will stink for three days - and while he's showering make him coffee and serve it to him, and maybe give him your sweater."

THE GENTLE PRESENCE OF GOD

Embracing the poor in the spirit of Christ, as Fr. Henri Nouwen explains, asks more of us than merely lending a hand to the underprivileged. Instead, it requires "going directly to those people and places where suffering is most acute and building a home there." Genuine Christian compassion calls us to accompany needy people on their life-journeys and to share the frustrating setbacks that might otherwise cause them to lose hope. Its goal is not simply to bring about "individual or social change" but "to reveal the gentle presence of our compassionate God in the midst of our broken world."

BECOMING VINCENTIANS

One way we answer that call at Lourdes is through our local conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, a Catholic lay organization committed to "offering person-to-person service to those who are needy and suffering." SVdP offers help with immediate needs as well as personal connections to help clients examine and overcome whatever obstacles caused them to seek help. As a result, clients can plan for the future and gain more control over their lives. Ultimately, Vincentians try to use what they learn from their clients to lobby for systemic social change aimed at breaking the cycle of poverty. Though not all of us serve as Vincentians, every Catholic - in the spirit of Pope Francis - can labor like a Vincentian to bring hope to people who may have lost it.

To learn more about the work of the **Society of St. Vincent de Paul** at Lourdes, contact coordinator Joel Maxwell at joelqmaxwell@yahoo.com or 678-892-6163.

Our Lady of Lourdes Monthly Calendar

FEBRUARY 2014

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>2 Sunday Breakfast 7A Social Action 9:30A Sunday School 10:30A Teen Ministry 10:30A St. Vincent De Paul 12N KPC/CLA Spring Tea Mtg 12N Dancer's Rehearsal 1:30P Parenting Ministry 2P Super Bowl Party 5:30P</p>	<p>3 Life After the Pink Slip 7P</p>	<p>4 Lourdes Lunch 11:30A Zumba Class 6:00P Lector Prep 7P Stephen's Ministry 7P Baptismal Class 7P Dancer's Rehearsal 7P</p>	<p>5 AGLD Rehearsal 7P Bible Study 7:00P</p>	<p>6 Lourdes Lunch 11:30A Zumba Class 6:30P AGLD Rehearsal 6:30P Choir Rehearsal 7:30P</p>	<p>7 YAG Meeting 7:30P</p>	<p>1 SAT Prep/Teen Ministry 9A Lector Prep 10:30A Dance by Kenya 1:30P Rosary 4:30PM 5:00PM Eucharist</p>
<p>9 Live Streaming 10A Mass Sunday School 10:30A Teen Ministry 10:30A Parenting Class 10:30A KPC/ KPC/CLA 1:30P Jr. Daughters 1:30P</p>	<p>10 Stand up for Kids 4P Pastoral Council Meeting 7P</p>	<p>11 Lourdes Lunch 11:30A Zumba Class 6:00P Dancer's Rehearsal 6:30P</p>	<p>12 AGLD Rehearsal 7P Bible Study 7:00P</p>	<p>13 Lourdes Lunch 11:30A Zumba Class 6:30P AGLD Rehearsal 6:30P Choir Rehearsal 7:30P</p>	<p>14 Valentine's Day</p>	<p>15 Stephen's Ministry 8:30A SVDP Meeting 9A Pastoral Care Meeting 10A Dance by Kenya 1:30P ASBA Meeting 2PA Rosary 4:30PM 5:00PM Eucharist</p>
<p>16 Trip to Birmingham 7A KPC Jr Spaghetti Fundraiser Bible Study 10:30A St. Vincent de Paul 12N Habit Ministry 12N Dancer's Rehearsal 1:30P</p>	<p>17 President's Day</p>	<p>18 Lourdes Lunch 11:30A Zumba Class 6:00P Stephen's Ministry 7P Dancer's Rehearsal 7P</p>	<p>19 AGLD Rehearsal 7P Bible Study 7:00P</p>	<p>20 Lourdes Lunch 11:30A Zumba Class 6:30P AGLD Rehearsal 6:30P Choir Rehearsal 7:30P</p>	<p>21 <i>Men's Ministry</i> Movie Night for Edgewood 7:30P YAG Meeting 7:30P</p>	<p>22 Stephen's Ministry 8:30A SAT Prep/Teen Ministry 9A Dance by Kenya 10A Eratism 11A Rosary 4:30PM 5:00PM Eucharist Ulireya 6:30pm</p>
<p>23 Live Streaming 10A Mass Bookstore Open Sunday Breakfast 7A Sunday School 10:30A Teen Ministry 10:30A Parenting Class 10:30A Health Ministry 12N Teen Ministry Black History Mass 12N Dancer's Rehearsal 1:30P</p>	<p>24 Finance Council Meeting 6:30P Taize Prayer Group 8:00PM</p>	<p>25 Lourdes Lunch 11:30A Zumba Class 6:00P</p>	<p>26 AGLD Rehearsal 7P Bible Study 7:00P</p>	<p>27 Lourdes Lunch 11:30A Zumba Class 6:30P AGLD Rehearsal 6:30P Choir Rehearsal 7:30P</p>	<p>28 YAG Meeting 7:30P</p>	

Join us for Sunday Breakfast, February 2nd & 23rd

Sponsored by the Knights of Peter Claver

Stephen's Ministry Weekend ~ February 22nd & 23rd ~ More Details to Follow

Save the Date ~ March 3rd & 4th ~ Lourdes Lenten Revival ~ 7P

Save the Date ~ March 5th ~ Ash Wednesday Ecumenical Service at Ebenezer ~ 7P