



With the help of Our Father's Table ministry to the chronically homeless in Orange County, California, Marsha and her 7-year-old son have their own apartment, and the young mother has a good job and her own car. (Courtesy of Our Father's Table)



by Dan Morris-Young

[View Author Profile](#)

[**Join the Conversation**](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

January 10, 2018

[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)

A [second annual memorial ceremony](#) for homeless persons who died in Orange County, California, during 2017 took place Dec. 21 at [Christ Cathedral](#) in Garden Grove. The names of 210 were read, 20 more than last year.

A [memorial Mass for the homeless](#) was also celebrated at Old St. Patrick's Parish in Chicago on Dec. 19.

On the positive side in Orange County, Marsha has a good job and her own car today, and she and her 7-year-old son have their own apartment. The young mother is one of the more than 100 homeless people whom [Our Father's Table](#) has helped to beat back addiction, medical challenges, and other factors that had led them to the streets. Founded in 2014 by Gina Seriel, a member of [Mission Basilica Parish](#) in San Juan Capistrano, the ministry to chronically homeless in Orange County has received significant help from Catholic entities, including the [Orange Diocese](#), [Serra's Pantry and Outreach](#) at Mission Basilica, [Knights of Columbus Council 12834](#), and the [Sisters of St. Joseph Healthcare Foundation](#).

The ladder out of homelessness has many rungs. One of them is furnishing one's living space, once one has living space. A ministry spawned at [Our Lady of the Holy Souls Parish](#) in Little Rock, Arkansas, does that. Parishioners Steve Hoffmann and Shannon Callahan spearheaded formation of Settled Souls, a ministry "that provides donated furniture, donated goods and welcome packages to homeless clients who have been put into housing by Jericho Way," [reports the Arkansas Catholic newspaper](#). Jericho Way is a homeless resource center in Little Rock operated by the Catholic nonprofit [Depaul USA](#).

Advertisement

Outreach to the homeless is also a staple of [Dolores Mission Parish](#) in East Los Angeles, the birthplace of well-known [Homeboy Industries](#), founded by Dolores Mission's former pastor, [Jesuit Fr. Gregory Boyle](#). Boyle and Dolores Mission parishioner Yolanda Gallo (also key to Homeboy Industries' establishment) will be honored at the parish's 20th annual [La Fiesta de Comunidad](#) to be held at [Skirball](#)

[Cultural Center](#) on Feb. 10 at 5 p.m. A new book on Boyle's experiences in outreach ministry to gang members, [*Barking to the Choir: The Power of Radical Kinship*](#), was released late last year.

NCR [Young Voices](#) essayist Mark Piper [recently advocated](#) incorporating the homeless into parish life more actively, via efforts such as a dedicating a Mass to and for them. The suggestion was one of eight Piper proposed for parishes to better embrace Pope Francis' exhortation to exhibit "[missionary creativity](#)."

[Dan Morris-Young is NCR's West Coast correspondent. His email is dmyoung@ncronline.org.]

We can send you an email alert every time [The Field Hospital](#) is posted. Go to this page and follow directions: [Email alert sign-up](#).

This story appears in the **The Field Hospital** feature series. [View the full series](#).