

**For The Bulletin Of
21 March 2021**



THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT
From Father Robert

The gospel of this Sunday proclaims the paradoxical wisdom of emptying in order to become full, of dying so that we may be raised to new life. This is the “hour” of radical obedience and exaltation for which, from Cana, through controversies, festivals, and miraculous signs, Jesus has been waiting an hour that in today’s gospel sees Jesus sought by new “first disciples,” those beyond Israel, to whom the evangelist refers as “some Greeks.” They were probably Greek-speaking Jews who had come up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. They approach Andrew and Philip, two of Jesus’ original disciples who are apparently approachable and good at bringing others to Jesus. (Remember Peter, Nathanael, and the boy with five barley loaves and two fish.) Although these seekers may have been Jews from far-flung places, John uses his episode on the threshold of Jesus’ “hour” to suggest the call of the Gentiles. Many nations who eagerly seek Jesus will be drawn into His

mystery when He is lifted up from the earth on a cross; all those who will belong to the church that is meant to be multiracial and multicultural.

To explain the meaning of His “hour,” Jesus tells the parable of a grain of wheat. When it is dropped into the earth, the seed shrinks, empties itself, and dies. But in the warmth and moisture of the new earth life breaks out of the husk and bears much fruit. “Fruit” in John’s gospel means “life,” and the hour is at hand when Jesus will be buried in the heart of the earth and rise from there to be transformed and transforming life.

The larger world beyond Israel now includes us. If we wish not only to see but also to follow Jesus, we must choose to empty ourselves of self-centeredness, of the instinct for self-preservation at the expense of our sisters and brothers. Those insulated from others’ suffering, eager for good connections, popularity, and status, rather than finding and following Jesus, will lose their lives. From seeds buried in the warm love and service of others, and watered by faithfulness to our baptismal commitment, the Christian community grows into the mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus. This is not easy; it was painful for Jesus, and it is painful for us. Jesus’ soul was troubled, we hear, but He embraces His hour of His own free will. He has already told the crowds, “No one takes it [my life] from Me, but I lay it down on My own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. This command I have received from My Father.” What Jesus has done, He proclaims, has always been for the glory of His Father, and He will die because of the way He lived. The Father’s voice affirms Jesus’ proclamation, declaring that Jesus is giving glory to God, and will be glorified because of this. It is a voice, says Jesus, that speaks not so much to reassure

Jesus Himself, but to bring faith and encouragement to the bystanders.

We are now the crowd assembled around Jesus. Do we understand His words or the Father's voice? Can we recognize His saving cross at the epicenter of the tragedies that are born of sin, planted on the seismic fault lines that threaten to open and crack our world apart: the divides between rich and poor, peace and violence, north and south, east and west? Even more important, can we allow ourselves to be drawn to the exalted cross of Christ so that we ourselves may offer from the "right place" of the cross the fruit of healing reconciliation for the glory of God?



In the first reading, God declares through Jeremiah, "I will forgive their evildoing and remember their sin no more." How have you experienced God's forgiveness this Lent?

The psalmist implores God, "Create a clean heart in me." What attributes do you think of when considering a "clean heart?"

The Second reading from the Letter to the Hebrews offers the image of Christ being "perfected through suffering." Have there been moments of suffering in your life that have led to spiritual growth?

Jesus tells His disciples "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit." How have you encountered this mystery that death leads to even more abundant life?



About Liturgy: Building A Church

Today's Lectionary brings our Lenten journey, nearing its end once again, in some ways back to where we began. You will recall that this particular Lenten cycle is one of covenants: first Noah, then Abraham, and others. On this Sunday, we hear that there are days coming when God will make a new covenant, where God's laws will not be handed on to us externally, like the Ten Commandments on tablets, but will be written on our heart. In the gospel, we are told of God's thunderous voice, much like the voice at the Transfiguration. Everything is seeming to return us to where the journey began: Jesus' proclamation that the kingdom of God is at hand.

In our various ministries, it can frequently feel like we are running in circles, especially if we lost sight of the reasons for our ministry, our love of it and the people of God, or if we feel unsupported: by our fellow parishioners, by those in leadership roles, or by the very people we believe we have been called to serve. Particularly as Holy Week approaches, days can grow very long and stressful with the many different preparations demanded of us.

A modern-day parable – not an original one – may be helpful in this circumstance. It seems that one day, a man came upon a group of stone masons. He approached the first to ask what he was doing that day. Barely looking up from his work, the man grumbled, “I’m laying bricks,” and with a sigh continued his labors. Approaching a second worker, the man asked him the same question. “I’m making a wall,” the worker said, pausing to look left and right at the long expanse already partially created. Then the man walked up to the third worker. “What are you doing today?” he asked him. Putting down his tools, the mason gestured that the man should follow him a few steps away. Turning back around to his work, the laborer spread his arms wide and exclaimed, “I’m building a church!”

So it is with ministries, if we pause a few moments to ponder our work in the vineyard. What is the expression, if we don’t have ten minutes a day during which we can pray, we should pray for twenty minutes? Find some time during the next two weeks to contemplate/reflect during all the busyness – which can at times seem like we are simply fortifying a wall or even just moving heavy stones from point A to point B – how we are in fact building a church: a sacred assembly of God’s holy people, the Body of Christ present in the world.



Thank You Church Cleaners

Last Saturday morning, parishioner volunteers came to once again clean both the church and the bathrooms for us. Our thanks and gratitude to: **Carole Miller, Jean Rogers, Angela Bueno, Mency Osborne, Rose Salamanca, Reno and Thelma Benasfre, Al Cosce, Jun Bajet, and Steve Rojek.**



Palm Sunday Preparation

Each year, we invite our parishioners to help prepare the palm fronds that will be distributed as a part of our Palm Sunday worship and the beginning of Holy Week. We will cut, wash, dry, and bundle the palms in preparation for Palm Sunday on Friday, March 26th, beginning at 9:00 a.m. in the Gathering Plaza. Please bring scissors, gloves, and a joyous heart.

The Liturgies of Palm Sunday

Saturday, March 27th, 4:00 p.m., Vigil Liturgy in Church; Reservations by Flocknote with only 85 people, masks required, and social distancing.

Sunday, March 28th, 9:00 a.m., Liturgy in the church; reservations required by Flocknote with 85 people; masks and social distancing required; Walk Up Communion at 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.



We will begin the Sacred Paschal Triduum with the Celebration of Holy Eucharist on Holy Thursday, April 1st, at 3:00 p.m. The Liturgy will be celebrated in the church with a maximum of 85 parishioners.

Reservations are to be made on Flocknote; masks will be required along with social distancing. Because of the pandemic, we will not be able to observe The Mandatum, Washing of Feet, nor will there be the traditional candlelight procession to the Altar of Repose, nor will we be able to have an Altar of Repose or Adoration.



April 2nd, 12:00 Noon, Stations of the Cross in the Parking Lot; no reservations, however, masks are required along with social distancing; led by our Knights of Columbus under the direction of Steve Rojek.

3:00 p.m. The Solemn Commemoration of The Lord's Passion and Death; in church with a maximum of 85 persons; reservations required via Flocknote; masks are required along with social distancing. Because of the pandemic, we will not be able to approach the Cross for veneration (touching, kissing, embracing, passing). The veneration will be done as all present will be invited to kneel or sit for a time of reflection as we gaze upon "the Wood of the Cross upon which was hung our salvation." The Passion will be proclaimed and Holy Communion will be distributed.



EASTER

Saturday, April 3rd, Holy Saturday Evening, 8:00 p.m., Easter Liturgy in Church with a maximum of 85 persons, reservations via

Flocknote; masks and social distancing required. Sung Eucharist with the Renewal of Baptismal Promises and Sprinkling Rite.

Sunday, April 4th, Easter Day, 9:00 a.m. in Church with a maximum of 85 persons; reservations required through Flocknote; masks and social distancing required. Renewal of Baptismal Promises and Sprinkling Rite.

11:00 a.m. Easter Liturgy in church with a maximum of 85 persons; reservations required by Flocknote; masks and social distancing required; Renewal of Baptismal Promises and Sprinkling Rite.

12:30 – 1:30 p.m. Walk Up Easter Communion; masks and social distancing required.



One of the hallmarks of Easter Worship at our parish is the glorious environment that our Art & Environment creates, not just for Easter Day but also for the entire period of the Great Fifty Days. In spite of the pandemic, the Committee has continued to prepare the sanctuary since we are now able to gather for in-person liturgy – and that is true for Easter as well.

I invite you to support their work by contributing to the Environment and Flower Fund for Easter by using the envelope provided in our Envelope Packet or an

envelope of your choice. Your contribution can be either In Honor Of or In Loving Memory Of...a family member, a friend, a loved one. Please mark your envelope accordingly: either In Honor Of OR In Loving Memory Of...and list the appropriate name. If you have an Envelope Number, please include it. Your generosity will provide the beautiful panels of cloth used to adorn each Icon, the candles, and the flowers, plants and fresh flower arrangements.

Those of you who are able, will join us in the church for a Saturday evening, April 3rd, celebration of Easter Eucharist at 8:00 p.m. and again on Easter Morning, April 4th, at 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Flocknote will be used to make reservations for both the Saturday evening and Easter Sunday morning Liturgies.

On behalf of the Art & Environment Committee Members and myself, I thank you for what you will do to help us create a beautiful and meaningful environment for the Great Fifty Days.





Lenten Reconciliation

Those who wish to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent are most welcome to arrange for a time to do so with me. Please call the parish office and leave both your name and telephone number, and I will call you back to arrange a mutually convenient time. Reconciliation may be celebrated on weekdays as well as on Saturday afternoon.



Lenten Fasting and Abstinence

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are obligatory days of universal fast and abstinence. Fasting is obligatory for all who have completed their 18th year until the beginning of their 60th year. Fasting allows a person to eat one full meal. Two smaller meals may be taken, not to equal one full meal. Abstinence (from meat) is obligatory for all who have completed their 14th year of age. If possible, the fast on Good Friday is continued until the Easter Vigil (on Holy Saturday night) as the “paschal fast” to honor the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus and to prepare to share more fully and

celebrate more readily his Resurrection. Fridays in Lent are obligatory days of abstinence (from meat) for all who have completed their 14th year. As always, anyone for whom fasting or abstinence would pose a health risk is excused.

Justice Corner by Carolyn Krantz, Pastoral Associate

Mary is our model for Holy Week. Her “yes” was not only to the angel in Nazareth, but all through her life- yes to the journey to Bethlehem, yes to the flight into Egypt, yes through the journey of Jesus' public life, yes as His passion began to unfold, yes at the foot of the cross, yes in the upper room.

When life gets difficult, when the answers are unknown, when aging approaches, we have a model to follow. Every time something occurs in the day that is difficult or painful, try to remember that the answer is yes. God has placed this yes in our hearts. Sometimes this yes causes suffering. The Letter to the Hebrews says that we learn obedience through what we suffer.

The famous Greek poet Aeschylus says, “He who learns must suffer. And even in our sleep, pain which cannot forget, falls drop by drop upon the heart, until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom to us by the very grace of God.”

Drop by drop, we gain the wisdom that God has waiting for us. The Gospel of John says plainly, “Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.” Each yes is a dying, but each yes leads to wisdom and light of the resurrection.

All suffering troubles us, but the Gospel says clearly that if we are “lifted up,” that is, crucified with Jesus, we will draw all things to the life of Jesus. “I will draw everyone to

myself.” The Saints know this. The poor and sick come to this awareness. We are not taken down by suffering, but lifted up. Our yes counters all the no's of this world. Our yes brings out the truth. It is the source of all goodness. When we know this, we are sure of our oneness with Him.

“The death of Jesus is emblematic of the price paid for a life of radical engagement with the prevailing paradoxes of our time.”(1) Think of all the paradoxes we have encountered this past year: the pandemic, climate change, violence, racism. Imagine yourself at-one-with the sick, or those who have lost their homes, or those who have lost a loved one through violence. Imagine yourself on the other end of a racial put down. Imagine the worries that come with not being able to feed your children. Find a way to radically engage with the suffering of this world and say yes.

There is a story in the life of St. Francis where he asks a complaining brother to imagine that he is cold and hungry, that not only the world, but those closest to him have rejected and derided him, and even thrown him out! “That is perfect joy,” says the saint, because then you are at one with Jesus. Let us rejoice that we are worthy to suffer with Him.

(1) O'Murchu, Diarmuid. 2012. *God in the Midst of Change*, Manila: Claretian Publications.

***Parish Perspective by
Peter Degl'Innocenti, Pastoral Associate
Shock It to Me***

“Should I shave or not?” That was one of the questions I asked myself while reflecting on the fact that I would be confined to my car for Sunday's drive-in Mass. Luckily, I decided on the full groom and shower route to start the week. As I pulled into the

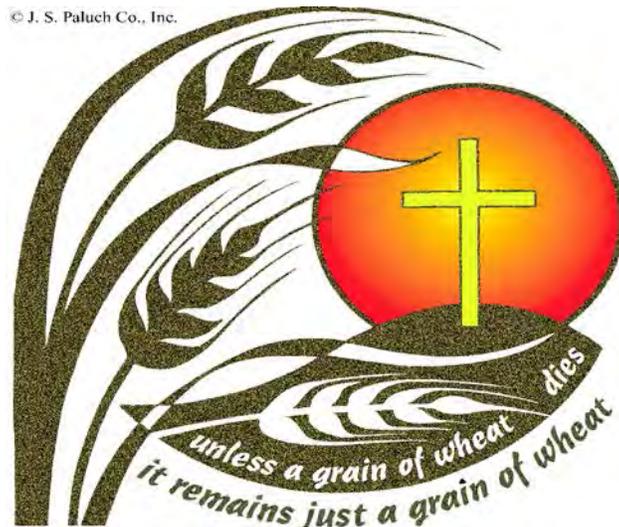
parking lot a volunteer approached my window and before he could say anything, I proclaimed I would be remaining in my car. “Well, you can stay in your car if you like but the Mass is going to be inside,” he said. I was shocked! Delightfully so but shocked none the less. When the State and/or County went from the purple tier to the red tier it gave Fr. Robert discretion to allow us into the church rather than brave the cold weather. I wish that they had assigned numbers 1-10 instead of colors. How many colors are there? Is there a super ‘Ultraviolet’ tier, magenta, or periwinkle tier? And all my life the color red meant the most danger, what happened?

So, I grabbed my mask and proceeded to the church doors to be sanitized before entry. I let the ushers guide me to a pew which turned out to be my usual spot. Seated, I began to scan the other pews that revealed so many familiar faces. Names were ever so silently spoken, names like Ron, Faye, Gordon, Annette, Bobbie, Sue, Rick, Harlan, and many more. It was a flood of names; it was a flood of joy to be back in their company. Why do we feel such joy? Is it not the presence of the Lord that comes to us when we gather? We all know and pray for one another but when we gather in his name there is a newness of life within us. A joyous life. Before He is ever present on the altar, He is present when we gather. At both times giving life to us.

Fr. Robert reflected the wonder of our gathering at the beginning of his homily. He spoke of how good it was to look out over the pews and see so many living faces rather than preaching to an empty church and an inanimate camera. He called for a show of hands of how many people had had their first shot. About 7 or 8 hands went up. Then he called for those who had received both shots. Most of the remaining hands

went up, at least a good two dozen. Not a bad ratio considering the limited number of people attending.

There are many hopeful changes on the horizon. We've set our clocks ahead with the changing season of Spring. We have immunized ourselves, permanently altering the course of the pandemic. We look forward to gathering a flock of people, once scattered by the corona virus and our own deeds, to a new growing and vibrant St. Ignatius of Antioch parish. It's good to be back in church.



FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT



Transform Us

Loving God,
through all the ages you create new life
and see that it is good.
Having given us all good gifts,
you gave more: you gave yourself,
doing something completely new
from the moment of Mary's yes.

You transform even death, pain,
and suffering.
You transform endings into beginnings,
buried seeds to fruitful plants.
Transform us, help us to follow where
you lead,
that we might live with you forever.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, March 21, 2021

The Grain of Wheat



Today's readings: Jeremiah 31:31–34; Psalm 51:3–4, 12–13, 14–15; Hebrews 5:7–9; John 12:20–33. After triumphantly entering Jerusalem, Jesus knows that his passion is imminent. He also knows that no one around him expects what is about to occur. Jesus uses the image of a seed to help his friends to understand.

“Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.” Like the seed, Jesus will die. Like the seed, Jesus will bear much fruit, eternal life given to each one of us. His death, when he is “lifted up from the earth” on the cross, “will draw everyone” to him.

When a seed is planted, the seed coat breaks apart as the plant within it begins to grow and develop. The seed itself ceases to exist in a meaningful way. From the beginning, though, the prospect of new life, the germ, was within the seed. Jesus recognized that his life had to be laid down for the potentiality of eternal life to come to fulfillment.

Through Jesus, the germ of eternal life exists in us as well. He tells us that discipleship entails imitating him. We have to let the seed of our current life break apart for the new plant to grow.

Journal about the experience of letting go of your old life in order to nurture the new.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, March 22

Neither Do I Condemn You

The woman caught in adultery expected to die. Instead, she hears, “Neither do I condemn you. Go, [and] from now on do not sin any more.” What must she have felt in that moment, to be forgiven? This same forgiveness is available to us every time we ask for it. God’s mercy is always there, sometimes we just need to celebrate it. Examine your conscience. No one is perfect. Receive the sacrament of reconciliation and you will feel the full force of God’s merciful love. *Today’s readings: Daniel 13:1–9, 15–17, 19–30, 33–62 or 13:41c–62; Psalm 23:1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6; John 8:1–11.*

Tuesday, March 23

God’s Voice

As Holy Week nears, spend five to ten minutes in silence reflecting on God’s presence and action in your life. When did you hear God’s voice today? When did you feel calm and peaceful? When did you feel that you did not live up to what God was calling you to do? How can you adjust your life to be more open to God’s will? *Today’s readings: Numbers 21:4–9; Psalm 102:2–3, 16–18, 19–21; John 8:21–30.*

Wednesday, March 24

Uncomfortable Truth

God spoke to Abraham and Abraham believed. The trust Abraham had in God, the keeper of promises, sets him apart. Jesus contrasts Abraham’s trust, his belief in the truth, with the reaction Jesus faces as he teaches and preaches. Truth can be uncomfortable. Maybe you have been with a small child who, unburdened with lessons about politeness, describes a situation with embarrassing accuracy. Those situations pass in a moment. The truth to which Jesus testified had the power to discomfort more deeply, but he tells us “the truth will set you free.” What can that mean in your life? *Today’s readings: Daniel 3:14–20, 91–92, 95; Daniel 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56; John 8:31–42.*

Thursday, March 25

Annunciation of the Lord

A young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel, meaning “God is with us.” The words of Isaiah carry us to the house of Mary in Nazareth, where a young girl is addressed as “favored one.” She is troubled, and the angel tells her not to be afraid. The young girl is not afraid. Her words will change history: “May it be done to me according to your word.” From the moment of Mary’s yes, God began to do something completely new in the world. Mary’s vocation is unique, yet her response, her yes, is something we are able to imitate. Pray the Rosary today, and ask for Mary’s intercession that you might be more like her to answer with a brave yes to God’s call. *Today’s Readings: Isaiah 7:10–14, 8:10; Psalm 40:7–8a, 8b–9, 10, 11; Hebrews 10:4–10; Luke 1:26–38.*

Friday, March 26

A New Way

Jesus finds himself in trouble with the authorities again and again because the kingdom of God, which he came to inaugurate, did not adhere to the expectations of the people. Jesus stood with those who lacked power, authority, and status, and in the Beatitudes, he tells us that standing alongside them is standing with him. How can you embrace those on the margins? *Today’s readings: Jeremiah 20:10–13; Psalm 18:2–3a, 3bc–4, 5–6, 7; John 10:31–42.*

Saturday, March 27

God Transforms

Approaching Holy Week, the readings show the plot against Jesus growing stronger. The plot against Jesus was about self-preservation, yet Caiaphas’ words unwittingly testify to what God was doing: “He prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not only the nation, but also to gather into one the dispersed children of God.” *Today’s Readings: Ezra 37:21–28; Jeremiah 31:10, 11–12abcd, 13; John 11:45–56.*



TASK FORCE ON RACIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY

Messages of Collaboration from the Task Force to the Priests of the Oakland Diocese

“We want to be supportive to all priests in the diocese, as well as a group with lots of information to share.”

“While we are focused on justice for African-Americans for now, using the strategies of Targeted Universalism, we want to create models and tactics for other ethnicities to address racism.”

“We, as the Task Force, wish to be partners in this process, not contenders. We would like to be a resource for you to respond to the variety of arenas touched by racism such as education, pastoral care, media communications, and etc.”

“We are a diverse collective from a variety of races, parish communities, ethnicities, backgrounds, experiences, professions, and stations in life, our common cause is our discipleship call to faith and justice.”



Through prayer, study, discussions, and interviews, the Diocese of Oakland's Task Force for Racial Justice will offer recommendations to Bishop Michael C. Barber, outlining tangible steps that will help address the scourge of racism. This group will also discuss the feasibility of reestablishing the Black Pastoral Center, and the engagement of the community in activities, spiritual and corporal, to help combat racism. Visit <https://oakdiocese.org/diocesan-task-force-for-racial-justice> for more information.

Suggestions for Next Steps

- * Inform yourself by reading, listening, and watching resources on the mechanics, effects, and experiences of systemic racism in order to educate and stimulate your awareness of the issues. The Task Force page on the Diocesan website has many resources for you to consider.
- * Converse and/or dialogue with others about racism. Because of the complexities and breadth of racism, get other views for understanding and support. Consider talking with those within your circle to establish a conversation, then expand it by slowly inviting others to bring their stories and viewpoints to the conversation.
- * Hold listening sessions to add the gravitas of personal experience to facts, opinions, and theories. Consider having the sessions skillfully facilitated to appropriately manage emotion and charged dialogue.
- * Identify a point person or form a ministry of interested parishioners who would bring awareness and address the issues of racism locally.
- * Visit Black Catholic parish communities like St. Columba or St. Benedict to experience Black Catholic liturgy.



March 2021 Opportunities for Involvement



Spring Baskets: Spring holidays are around the corner and we are excited to announce our 5th annual Spring Baskets Program. The families are so grateful for the support they receive from the community in helping to bring stabilization and 'normal' to their lives. If you or your community are interested in providing a spring basket for the children in our program, you can Sign up at: <https://tinyurl.com/44ppdudn>. If you have any question or would like more information, please contact Sandibel Arnold at sarnold@hopesolutions.org.



Homework Club Support: We are looking for compassionate individuals to help in our (now virtual) afterschool Homework Club that runs from August through June. You will provide academic and mentoring support to children from extremely low-income homes in grades K-12. Commitment is one day a week, either AM or PM, Monday through Thursday for the remaining of the school year. Adults and high school sophomores through seniors are encouraged to apply at www.hopesolutions.org/volunteer.



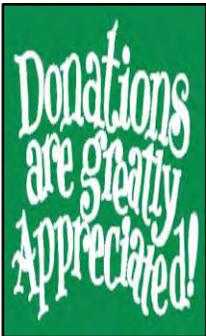
Furnishings: Every month we have families and individuals moving into homes. We try our best to provide furnishings and household items for incoming residents. This month we are looking for furnishings as well as cleaning supplies, kitchen kits, bath towels, dishes, pots and pans, and silverware. We are in need of beds and bedding. This month we are in need of several full- and twin-size beds. Please note that mattresses and bedding must be new. If you are able to donate any of these items or would like more information, please contact Sandibel Arnold at sarnold@hopesolutions.org. For a complete list of furnishings and items needed this month, please take a look at the attached Furnishing Request sheet [here](#).



Volunteers for Preschool Reading: We are looking for volunteers that would like to read for children in our virtual preschool program. We are also looking for volunteers interested in hosting an art, physical, or music activity for preschoolers. If you are interested in hosting an activity for the children in our preschool program, please contact Sandibel Arnold at sarnold@hopesolutions.org.

Seeking In-Kind Donations:

- New Twin and Full size mattresses and bedding as well as frames and platforms
- \$25 gift cards to Grocery Outlet, FoodMaxx, or Walmart
- Menstrual products of all kinds
- Diapers size 1 through 6 and baby wipes for families in our program
- \$5 Starbucks and Jamba Juice gift cards for report card check-ins
- Welcome Kits for new families moving into permanent housing (laundry basket filled with cleaning supplies, small household items, and \$25 gift card to FoodMaxx or Grocery Outlet)
- Cleaning supplies for our multi-site clients (Comet, Windex, Simple Green, buckets, mops, etc.)



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