

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

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Dining without Dollars – Part 3



EGGCORNS FROM POTLATCH AND FREE TURQUOISE-FEATHER MEALS

By Wanda Sue Parrott

BAKING bread and breaking bread are opposite aspects of Great Spirit in Monterey's "dining without dollars" free breakfasts by the beach.

If interested, come on Saturday morning, 8:45 a.m.-10 a.m. to the BBQ area behind the baseball field by Lake El Estero in Monterey.

Pastor Jim Nelson and his wife Judy, of Seaside, and Brian Bajari, host the weekly Pass the Word Ministry's "Serving the Homeless & Hungry Breakfast." They're assisted by businesses and individuals who donate time, food, money and application of Christianity's Golden Rule: *"Whatsoever ye would that others should do to you, do ye even so to them."*

Pastor Nelson says, "Pass the Word Ministry is a movement of compassionate people being faithfully present with our underserved friends living without permanent housing."

In June, it celebrated its eighth year of continuous service, which includes giving away tents, clothing and bicycles to mostly homeless men.

Critics Of Free Giveaways

Critics claim giveaway programs foster homelessness by attracting takers and lazy losers, but detractors don't deter practitioners of compassion, like Buddha, whose ancient version of the Golden Rule states: *Hurt not others with that which pains yourself.*

There's also historical Judaism's: *Thou shalt Love thy neighbor as thyself.*

Hinduism admonishes: *One should always treat others as they themselves wish to be treated.*

True compassion is often the driving force that compels those who serve the poor, hungry and houseless to continue the unrelenting task of sustaining hope in the face of hopelessness.

Al Siekert of Pacific Grove is such a spiritual sustainer.

Sunday Breakfasts With Al & Friends

Everyone is welcome at breakfast events every Sunday morning at Windows on the Bay in Monterey.

Al & Friends, a non-profit with goals similar to those of Pass the Word Ministry, was started by Al back in 2012. Every Sunday morning, they prepare and serve a wholesome hot breakfast to homeless people and whoever else feels like joining them.

As few as 70 and as many as 100 guests partake of both weekend breakfasts which, in spirit, are public potlucks with a tribal touch.

How A Potluck Becomes A Potlatch

Etymology of potluck is defined by Wikipedia as: *The word pot-luck appears in the 16th century English work of Thomas Nashe to mean "food provided for an unexpected or uninvited guest. . ."*

Today's communal meal where guests contribute food originated in the 1930s. Wikipedia calls it "an eggcorn from *potlatch* and by extension of traditional sense of luck of the pot" after an unidentified woman mistakenly called an acorn an "egg corn." The term now means a word used in error that sounds similar to the original.

Therefore, "potlatch" became "potluck." And that's where the Native American version of the Golden Rule comes in.

According to Merriam Webster, Potlatch means: "A ceremonial feast of the American Indians of the northwest coast marked by the host's lavish distribution of gifts or sometimes destruction of property to demonstrate wealth and generosity with the expectation of eventual reciprocation."

The difference between potlatch and potluck dining is that nothing reciprocal is expected when homeless and other hungry people break bread together, and destruction of property is hopefully not involved.

The Turquoise Feather Path

If you're having a hard time remaining unbiased, remember the Native American Golden Rule: *Do what needs to be done for the good of all.* This poem from my Turquoise Feathers collection as Prairie Flower may also help.

A BLESSING AT BIRTH

Welcome
to the place of red clay
which is earth
your birth home
for the seasons
of your soul
in its becoming
which is in all forms
Love's longing
to express Itself through life
as sons and daughters
of Great Spirit
be you sprouting seedlings
or soaring swallows
or furry felines
or hatched as spiders
or spawned as swimmers
or birthed in warm blood
be your lifespan but a day
or a century in length.

The call of Spirit is the same for all
as if it is the song of a flute
played like incessant winds through elms
it sings One Song
in language each living thing understands
as brothers and sisters
in Great Spirit.

Listen, feel it, and let it guide you
when you are lost
its expressions may vary
but the meaning is the same
I AM Great Spirit
I AM Life's longing
to express Itself through Love.

When life becomes tough
wrap yourself in the blanket of love
and your moccasins
will lead you safely home
Aho!

For details about the Sunday breakfasts, call Pastor Jim Nelson at Pass the Word Ministry, 831-204-8610,
and Al Siekert at Al & Friends at 831-402-0820.

Next week we'll cover more free food sources.

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