

St. Thomas of Canterbury Outreach

Ministries Newsletter

Summer 2023

Remembering Jim Eder, "Temporary" Director of the Soup Kitchen



"At one point my name just appeared in the parish bulletin as Director of the Soup Kitchen, so I went to Fr. Rochford and I said, 'Father, what's this?' and he said, 'Well, you're the only one down there that's not totally crazy.' And he was talking about the volunteers, not the guests.

He said, 'So you're in charge!' I said, 'No, no!' and he said, 'Yes, you are.' I said, 'Okay, I'll do it until someone else comes along, so put me down as Temporary Director.'

That was 1979."

From the [History of the Soup Kitchen](#)

You can read it at motherofgodchicago.org/food-pantry--soup-kitchen.html

This winter, the Soup Kitchen lost its long-time "temporary" director, Jim Eder. Jim passed from this life on February 6. Though he was a reluctant participant in the Soup Kitchen in the beginning, he ended up serving as the leader and guiding voice for the Soup Kitchen over its decades of operation.

As his obituary noted, Jim was "distinguished for his overwhelming generosity, deep faith, and talent at storytelling." But above all, he is remembered for the dignity with which he treated all he encountered.

Whether interacting with guests at the soup kitchen, volunteers, or Servant of God Dorothy Day, Jim looked at every person as a child of God, always guided by the Gospel of Matthew, 25:40:

"The king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'"

It was not just the guests at the Soup Kitchen who had their lives changed by Jim. As his obituary noted:

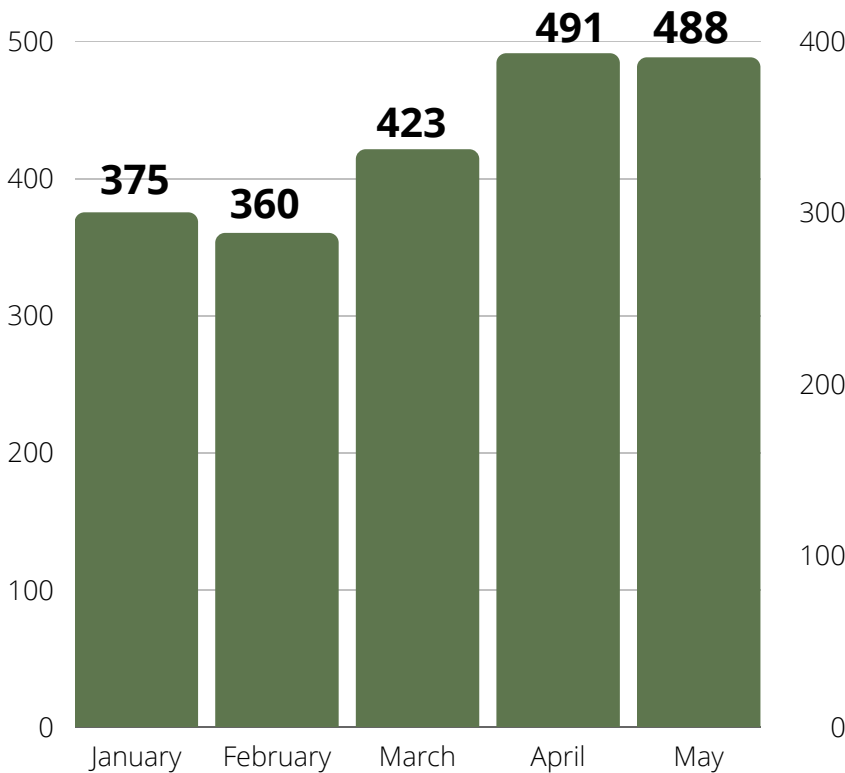
"The army of volunteers he attracted were nourished even more greatly than the droves of the poor, hungry, and homeless who straggled into the church basement.

In Jim's company, they witnessed the best a man can be."

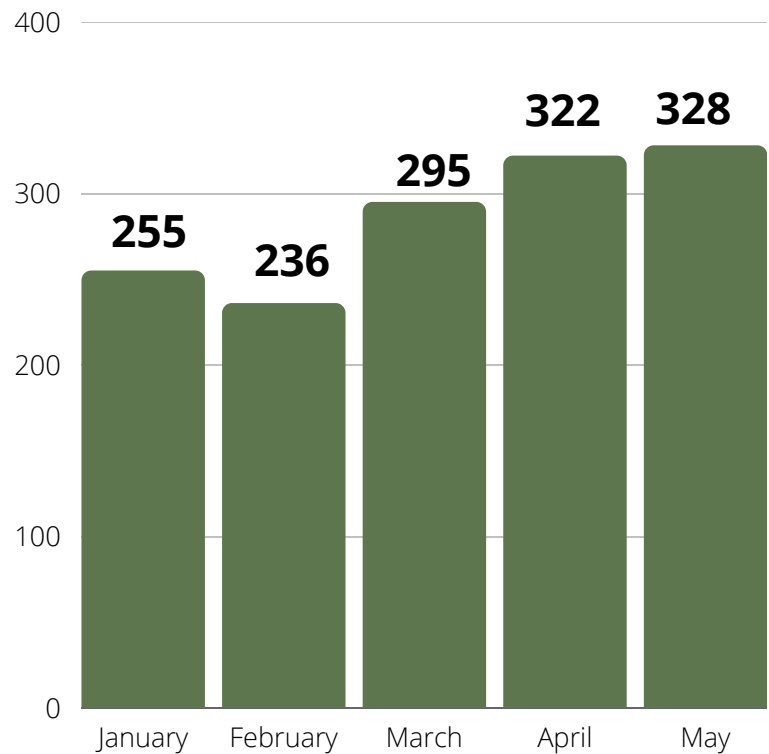
A framed portrait of Jim Eder will be blessed and hung in the Soup Kitchen in June. Please pray for him, and for all those who mourn him.

Food Pantry Servings

Individuals Served



Households Served



Thank you, Mount Carmel High School!

We were blessed to have five groups of sophomores from Mount Carmel Catholic Boys High School visit for service projects this spring! The field trip was part of their Impact Week and the theme was "poverty and hunger." They helped at St. Thomas of Canterbury Food Pantry, Soup Kitchen, Solidarity Gardens (see page 4) and St. Francis Catholic Worker House.

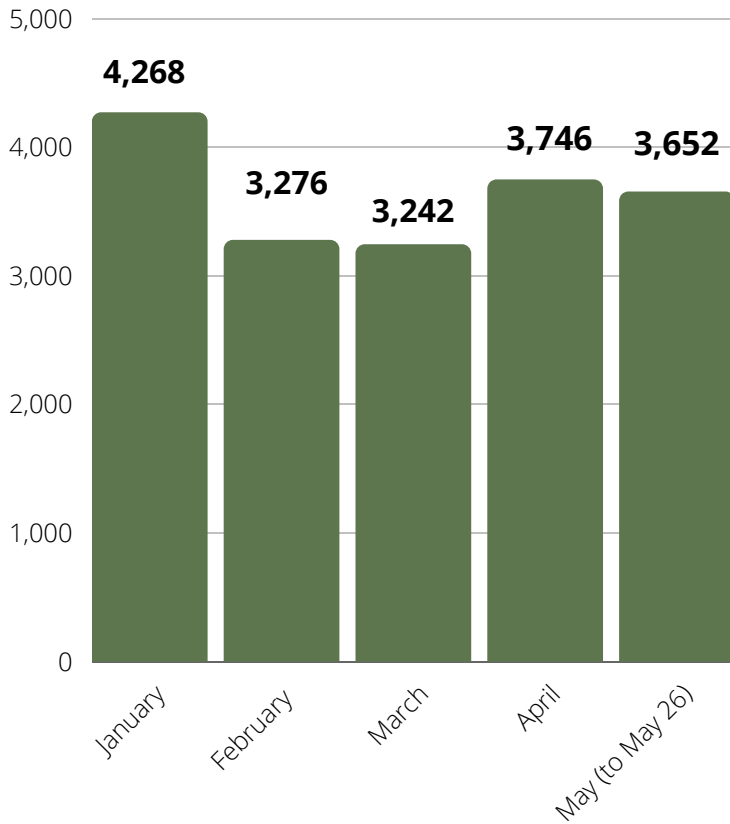


Donations for the Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry can be dropped off at St. Thomas of Canterbury Church (4827 N. Kenmore) on Tuesdays and Fridays from 2-3:30 PM. You can see what we need by scanning the QR code! Thank you for your generosity.

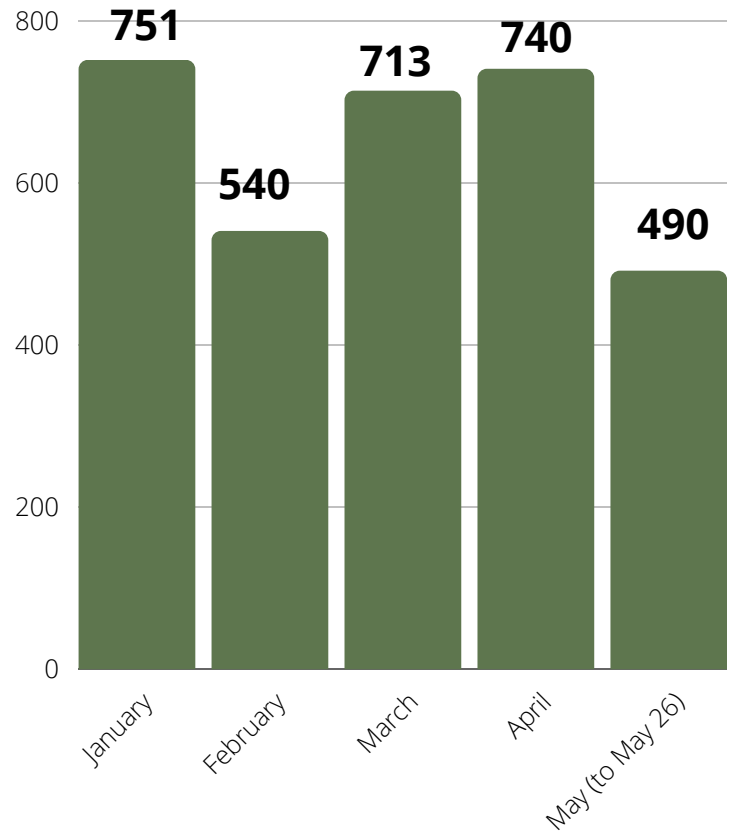


Soup Kitchen Servings

Meals Served



Guests Served



Why not come and experience for yourself what the Soup Kitchen is all about? We will need some extra help during the summer months. If you would like to volunteer on Tuesday and Friday afternoons at the Soup Kitchen, please contact Jennifer, coordinator of volunteers, at jfranco@archchicago.org

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Back to the Land

A new ministry is growing - literally - at St. Thomas of Canterbury. Welcome to Solidarity Gardens!

Solidarity Gardens is a collaboration of Canterbury House (a ministry of Mary, Mother of God parish) and St. Francis Catholic Worker House (whose Catholic Workers helped start the Soup Kitchen in 1978). We are growing fresh produce for the Soup Kitchen and our neighbors in need. We began planting in March with onions, which the Soup Kitchen uses in enormous quantities. Tomatoes and greens are in progress!

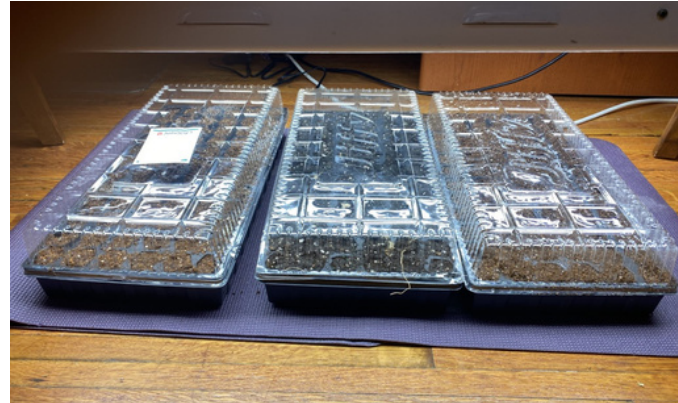
Why urban farming?

Our Eucharistic faith calls us to make the land fruitful and offer our gifts to God. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis draws our attention to the concept of Integral Ecology— the idea that the health of our church and community depends on the health of the land around us. Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day saw farms as critical to the Catholic Worker. Peter Maurin, who came from a farming background, understood the alienation from community that comes with alienation from the land.

As Jim Eder pointed out in a March 2022 panel on the past, present and future of the Catholic Worker (held at St. Thomas of Canterbury), the mechanization of farming has increased exponentially. People know less and less about how food is produced and the toll industrial farming takes -- eroding community ties even more. So it may be time for Catholic Workers to return to the agricultural vision that both Peter and Dorothy saw as part of the Worker ethos, Jim argued.

We are very fortunate to have two students from Loyola University, Jace and Kathryn, interning with us over the summer! Kevin Erickson, director of sustainability at Loyola University, is also working with us on the project. We have been blessed with support from parishioners at Mary, Mother of God and Catholic Workers at St. Francis House.

St. Isidore, patron of farmers, and Servant of God Dorothy Day, pray for us!



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