

Encountering the Poor

We at the McKenna Center learn much from our guests about the struggle to live with little or no income. The McKenna Center is a popular location for college delegations during alternative Spring break and for weeklong high school immersion programs during the summer months. The students who visit us are encouraged to get to know the poor at a deeper level, to learn from them as well as to learn about the crisis in affordable housing and to become advocates for those who have no voice.

A Voice for the Voiceless

The McKenna Center hosts a variety of lectures and forums designed to explore the realities in our city, nation and world that impact the poor.



What can you do?

The needs of the poor and homeless far outstrip the resources we have to combat their problems. You can help by contributing your time, treasure and talent to our efforts. Please contribute to our efforts according to your means.

“I really believe that every person is the revelation of God-the joy of God, the love of God.”

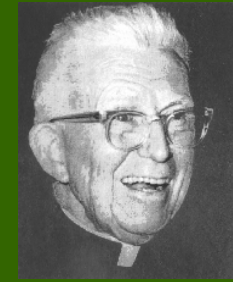
Horace McKenna S.J.

The Father McKenna Center

**Tom Howarth
Director**

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“When God let’s me into heaven, I think I’ll ask to go off in a corner somewhere for a half an hour and sit down and cry because the strain is off, the work is done, and I haven’t been unfaithful or disloyal. All these needs that I have known are in the hands of Providence and I won’t have to worry any longer who’s at the door, whose breadbox is empty, whose baby is sick, whose house is shaken and discouraged, and whose children can’t read.”

Horace McKenna, S.J.



Welcome
to

**The Father McKenna
Center**

**Tom Howarth
Director**

The Spirit of Father McKenna

The Father McKenna Center is located in the basement of Saint Aloysius Catholic Church at 900 North Capitol Street NW in Washington, DC. The McKenna Center exists to meet the needs of the poor and homeless who reside in one of Washington's poorest neighborhoods despite being in the shadow of the US Capitol Building. The McKenna Center continues the legacy of Father Horace B. McKenna SJ, a Jesuit priest who devoted his life and priesthood to the betterment of the poor. Each day, the McKenna Center fulfills the Gospel instruction to "feed the hungry, shelter the homeless and clothe the naked".



"The 'love gifts' that you distribute to the poor and needy are a proof to them that they are children of God and that you, who are their benefactors, are disciples of Jesus"

Horace McKenna S.J.

What We Do

The McKenna Center serves the needs of the poor, men, women and children through a variety of programs funded by generous individuals, religious orders and institutions, foundations and government grants.

Men's Drop-In Center

Life is hard for homeless men on the streets of Washington. There are only two drop-in centers in the downtown area for men and the McKenna Center is one of them. Each day an average of 70 men come to the McKenna Center seeking various services. They come to take a shower or have their clothes washed and to receive fresh clean clothes. They come seeking a bus token or other transportation assistance so they can get to a job or training opportunity. They can get their mail at the Center and use the Center as their address during a job search. Many come to get out of the cold or heat and to spend time in a safe place where they are treated with dignity. They attend a support group meeting before being served a substantial lunch. The drop-in center program is devoted to helping men overcome homelessness and addictions and to take a positive step toward a better life.

Drug and Alcohol Counseling

Mental illness and addictions are all too common among our city's homeless population. The McKenna Center now has the capacity to assist those suffering from addictions and direct them to the services they need to recover.

Feeding the Hungry

A basic purpose of the Father McKenna Center is to feed the hungry. Each day, volunteers, often students at Gonzaga High School who encounter the poor as an essential part of a Jesuit education, serve coffee to the men. Each day, women and men come to the McKenna Center to receive emergency food bags on a twice-per-month basis. Thanksgiving and Christmas see major drives to provide holiday meals for families. On Wednesday nights, a community meal

for the homeless is served known as PeaceMeal. The meals that are provided by the McKenna Center are designed to enhance not only the health but also the sense of self-worth of our guests.

Sheltering the Homeless

When the weather is very cold, the McKenna Center does its part to prevent people from freezing to death on our city's streets by operating a hypothermia unit. The homeless can get off the streets and come to the McKenna Center where they will be fed and kept warm and save. In another part of the church, up to six men can live year-round in our transitional night shelter program designed for those serious about overcoming addictions and achieving an independent life. Men in this program are working, staying drug-free and saving their money toward the day they will live on their own.

Emergency Assistance

Many of our brothers and sisters live one paycheck away from a crisis. Rising rents and utility costs are a particular burden on the poor. The McKenna Center operates a program to assist those who cannot pay their rent and/or utility bills and are therefore threatened with homelessness. To prevent people from becoming homeless, the McKenna Center steps in with assistance and also with vital education like budgeting guidance that can help prevent future crisis.

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