

Hello

I am writing to ask your help with a new initiative here at St. Mary's Cathedral. It has been placed powerfully on my heart that something must be done, as Church, to do what we can to help alleviate the homelessness crisis in these winter months. After discussing this with my spiritual director and with the support of Archbishop Mulhall, it has been decided to open an overnight warming centre for men from as soon as possible to the end of March. It will start small with only 12 beds at this time and will be located in the gym of St. Mary's Parish Centre. We will be open from 9 pm to 8 am. There will be extremely strict guidelines in place that if broken will mean a ban for that particular person for the rest of the winter season from both the overnight warming centre and St. Mary's Drop-in Centre. Training and screening will be provided for all volunteers. There will be three shifts for volunteers of four hours each night: 8:30 pm to 12:30 am, 12:30 am to 4:30 am and 4:30 am to 8:30 am. Each shift will have at least two volunteers. We won't open if we don't have at least two men for each shift. We hope to begin Monday, December 12th, if all Fire Department and City requirements can be achieved by that point. If not we will open as soon as all regulations can be met.

I am reaching out to the men of St. Mary's Cathedral parish and to men of all the parishes in the Kingston area for your assistance. Would you be able to give a four hour shift once a month? Would you be able to give more: perhaps a four hour shift twice a month or a four hour shift every week?

Ann Lyng has volunteered to assist with all the organizational aspects of the Overnight Warming Centre. If you are able to help would you please contact Ann at annlyng96@gmail.com or text her cell at 613-572-4892. Please let her know your availability: which day you prefer? which shift you prefer? and frequency: monthly, bi-weekly or weekly? If you have multiple availability then let her know that: e.g. if you prefer Monday, but Wednesday or Friday are also possible please let her know this. She is also available to you by email or cell should you have any questions.

Take this to prayer please and I thank you in advance for your assistance in this very important outreach to those who are in need. If you are unable to help at this time please keep this outreach very much in your prayers.

Please see attached my First Sunday of Advent homily when I first introduced this to the parish.

God bless you.

Father Shawn

Father Shawn's Homily introducing the overnight warming centre.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZbBcBNsYhM>