

A story by Don Costello ~ a former board member and longtime volunteer and friend of Matt Talbot Kitchen & Outreach

Father Nestor

“I first met him about ten years ago. I was serving at the Kitchen and noticed his kind face and welcome visage. As is often the case I talked to him a few times before I asked his name. He told his name was Nestor, Father Nestor and that he was a retired Catholic priest.

After that I thought maybe he was a bit deranged or didn't know what he was saying but I was still struck by his way with the homeless and his kind and welcoming way. I sometimes use to think that this is what St. Francis would be doing if he were alive today. I made a mental note that I should talk to him as often as I could because perhaps this was indeed a holy man and God knows I need to see and try to imitate holy men and women.

One cold and frost biting night with the wind howling after talking with Father Nestor I asked where he was going to sleep that night. I wondered where all those who were there that night would sleep. He assured me that everything was fine and he had his own little apartment. He even told me it was on 14th and C.

After cleaning up, and getting ready to go home I saw a bundle and noticed it had Father Nestor written on one of the notebooks in the packet. I asked my fellow volunteers if anyone knew where Father Nestor lived and they all looked at me kind of strange saying, “Father who?”

Well I knew he lived on 14th and C and so I thought, “I'll go find him!”

I took his small bundle and drove to that block and looked out the still defrosting window to see if I saw anybody I could ask. No one was out that night.

I got out of the car and went to the first house and knocked on the door and asked about a Father Nestor. “Nestor?” they asked. He lives in 1F.

What luck, finding his place on the first try. I was already freezing and wanted to get home to my fireplace.

I walked down the dark and dimly lit hall and knocked on the door. I could hear some voices and some movement and soon the door opened and one of the people from Matt Talbot Kitchen opened the door slightly. I smiled and asked is “Father Nestor here?”

He turned, opened the door and called out “Father Nestor, someone for you.” As the door opened, I could see in and couldn't believe my eyes. Every inch of floor space was covered with Matt Talbot Kitchen people, some in sleeping bags, some just on the floor and there was Father Nestor ministering to them with that same kind face.

As soon as he saw me he looked up from what he was doing and said, “Why Hello Don what are you doing here?”

Indeed what was I doing there. I was just returning a mislaid packet. Father was ministering to those who had no place to sleep that night.

Embarrassed and guilty, I went home to my big house on Bradfield Drive, knowing that I had a lot more to do if I was going to imitate Matt Talbot, no less than the St. Francis I saw tonight.

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