



MY BROTHER'S KEEPER
A Christian ministry of loving service and education

Our Mission:
"To bring the Love and Hope of Jesus Christ to those we serve."

Along the Way

We deliver furniture, food, and Christmas assistance free of charge to local families in need with no prerequisites for service.

SPECIAL EDITION - JUNE 2024



"We're just the delivery people. This is the man who sent you the furniture."

This special edition focuses on the life of ministry of Jim Orcutt, our co-founder who went home to God on January 22, 2024. A newsletter could never capture the depth, breadth, and profoundness of Jim's impact on the world but hopefully these stories help us appreciate what a special gift he was to all he encountered. Jim's words and, most importantly, his actions touched the lives of more than a million people and brought them closer to God through his devotion to serve through My Brother's Keeper, the Holy Cross Retreat House, Alcoholics Anonymous, and On the Street Ministry. We will surely never meet anyone like him!

Jim published the first My Brother's Keeper newsletter in November 1991. He entitled it 'Along the Way,' the same title used today. Its stated purpose was "to keep our community informed of the ministry's experiences, progress, and challenges as we go along our way in spreading the love of Jesus Christ." The article below was written by Jim for the November 2001 edition.

God Teaches Us As We Go 'Along the Way' By Jim Orcutt, 2001

Recently someone asked me what are some of the things I've learned, along the way, since God started My Brother's Keeper nearly fourteen years ago.

I thought of a delivery to a Spanish family in the early days of My Brother's Keeper. The mother and father were in their late thirties. They had two children, a ten-year-old son and a six-year-old daughter. As is often the case, the only one in the family who spoke English was Enrico, the ten-year-old boy.

Terry and I did the delivery in our first truck, affectionately known as the Green Monster, a name derived from its habit of breaking down. As we always do, at the conclusion of the delivery, we presented the family with a crucifix with our message, "We're just the delivery people. This is the person who sent you the furniture."

Enrico translated for us and it was truly a beautiful moment. His parents broke into smiles as their young son repeated our message in Spanish.

We do not always have everything the family needs on the initial delivery. Consequently, we had occasion to return to their home several times over the next couple of weeks.

It was winter and we noticed that Enrico had a severe cold. Every time we saw him, he was wearing the same light dungaree jacket without a lining.

Knowing that we were going to be making a delivery to the family the next day, we got a warm fur-lined winter coat for Enrico. We were very excited on the way to their home, knowing we were bringing a warm coat for this wonderful little boy.

At our knock, the father opened the door. As was usually the case when we visited, the mother was at the stove. The wonderful smell of rice and beans permeated the house. She half bowed and smiled a hello. Enrico and his sister were at the table playing a board game.

In Spanish and with gestures, the father beckoned us to step inside. As the children recognized us, they stood and broke into smiles. Without thinking, I started to wave Enrico toward us with

the intention of giving him the new coat. But suddenly I stopped... it must have been the Holy Spirit, because what I did next certainly was not the result of any conscious thought on my part.

Instead of giving the coat to Enrico, I turned and handed it to his father and pointed to the boy. Immediately, the father understood this was a new coat for his son. In Spanish, he called Enrico to him and told the boy to turn around.

Then the father helped the boy try on his new winter coat. Enrico turned around wearing his new coat and looked up at his father. Smiling broadly he said in English, "Thank you, Papa."

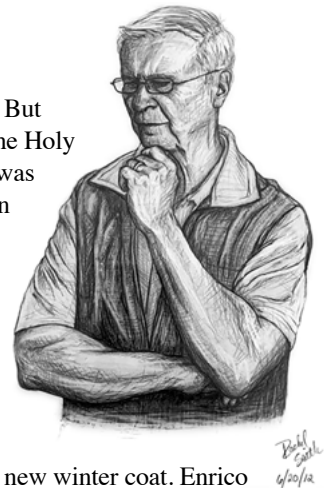
The father looked at us, his eyes filled with gratitude. Without any words being spoken, it was clear he was grateful not only for the coat but that he had been able to be the 'giver' of this gift to his son.

In recalling this beautiful delivery, I am always amazed at our Lord's wisdom and compassion. I thank Him for sending His Spirit at that very moment to guide me to give the coat to the father. I have carried the lesson with me since and shared the story with many others.

Fulfilling our mission "To bring the love and hope of Jesus Christ to those we serve" goes far beyond simply bringing furniture and food. The mission is most fully realized when our hearts, the hearts of those we serve, and the heart of Jesus meet in love, dignity and compassion.

At My Brother's Keeper we never speak of Christian service in terms of obligation or responsibility. It is too great a gift from God to be relegated to such phrases. Instead, we always speak of the privilege of service.

Truly, we are humbled that Christ would entrust to our weak human hands His most precious poor.



*Bob Gale
4/30/12*

Jim Orcutt Through the Years



The Ripple Effect of Jim's Life... Did You Know?

Jim Orcutt and My Brother's Keeper directly inspired the founding of Mission of Deeds, a well-respected charity on the North Shore which also helps furnish the homes of local families in need.

In 1992, Tony Triglione from Winchester, MA lived Cursillo at the Holy Cross Retreat House in Easton. During that weekend, Tony heard a talk given by Jim who shared the beauty of the work of My Brother's Keeper.

Like Jim, Tony grew up very poor and he

was surprised to learn that providing beds, furniture, and household goods was a hugely underserved area of human services.

After hearing Jim's talk, Tony decided to act. He bought a Ryder box truck, freed up space in a building that housed one of his auto parts stores, and started a North Shore version of My Brother's Keeper called Mission of Deeds. Tony was the organization's first president and its principal supporter throughout his life.

Mission of Deeds is now 31 years old, has 11 employees and 50 weekly volunteers, and has furnished the homes of 16,500 households in need by providing more than 5,000 pieces of furniture each year.

Tony passed away in 2011 at the age of 85 and was active at Mission of Deeds right to the end. It was always a great joy for Jim to know that God used him as the instrument of actual grace which touched Tony's heart and inspired him to bring so much goodness into the world.



Mission of Deeds
Neighbors Helping Neighbors



MISSION OF DEEDS
Furnishing Homes. Changing Lives.



“God Reached Out to Me Through Jim”

Spring
Together

Kara Sullivan from Braintree shared the following words for our “Mission Moment” at our 3rd Annual Spring Together event held at My Brother’s Keeper’s Easton facility on April 26.

Hello everyone. It is an honor to be here tonight...

My name is Kara Sullivan. I live in Braintree. I’m married to my loving husband Chris and we have two truly wonderful children, Rose who is 5 and Luke who is 3.

I became involved with My Brother’s Keeper through my husband’s parents, Eileen and Owen Sullivan. They started a family tradition of volunteering in the Christmas wrapping sessions here. It’s a very special time for our family to come together and I look forward to it every year.

I had been introduced to Jim Orcutt over the years at these Christmas events but didn’t know him well. In 2022 at a Christmas wrapping session, Jim came over to me to talk. At first we just chit-chatted about the start of My Brother’s Keeper. Then, Jim started talking about how God loves us like we love our own children and how God is there for us even when we can’t see him.

Little did he know, that previous year I had had a complicated miscarriage and two resulting surgeries. I was so mad at God, not just for losing our baby but for the continued suffering afterwards. I was questioning my faith and truly feeling lost. I didn’t share any of this with Jim,

but I started to cry. He hugged me and said he would be back. He returned later and gave me a crucifix, the same one given out to the recipients of our programs.

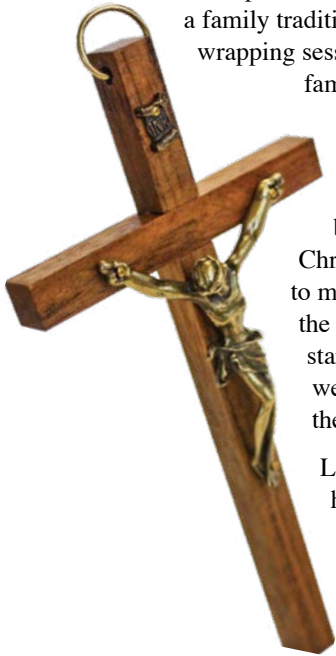
I don’t know how Jim knew I needed so much to hear his words. I do believe God works through people, though, and just maybe God reached out to me through Jim.

So what has this experience meant to me? To be honest, I’m still figuring that out. I do feel like I was gently lifted and placed back on the right path of my life. Since then, I’ve had the opportunity to be more involved with My Brother’s Keeper, I’m back at church, I’m here talking to you. All incredible opportunities.

Isn’t it amazing, what a five minute conversation, a delivery of groceries or Christmas gifts can set into motion? The My Brother’s Keeper mission is “To bring the love and hope of Jesus Christ to those we serve.” I think that is what makes My Brother’s Keeper so special.

Jim joked with me during that same conversation that he would have run in the other direction if he knew how big My Brother’s Keeper would get!

Thank you to Terry and Jim for being brave enough to start this organization. Thank you to Erich and Paul for helping my family and I get more involved. And thank you to the rest of the staff and all the volunteers changing lives and most importantly, providing hope and love.



Patty Canova’s daughter Lauren Van Luling pictured with her miracle son, Michael Jan Van Luling.

A Remembrance by Patty Canova

It was a November Cursillo twenty years ago and I was blessed to be on team. During one of the coffee breaks I had the chance to talk to Jim. He knew about my daughter Lauren’s numerous heartbreaking miscarriages, five to be exact. I told Jim she was pregnant again and I asked if he would keep her in prayer. He immediately said, “Let’s go into the chapel.” Jim brought me up into the altar space in front of the tabernacle and began to pray.

The words Jim used were different than what I had been saying. I was praying that this baby might be born. Jim’s prayer was in Thanksgiving to God for this baby we shall soon meet, thanking Jesus for the gift of this child that will grow to be a wonderful son and grandson who will love the Lord with all his heart, soul, and mind.

On the Feast of Saint John the Baptist, Michael Jan was born. It was truly a miracle that I know happened that very day in the chapel with my dear friend, Jim Orcutt.

Jim, I will miss you forever and a day. Rest in peace, my dear friend.

De Colores,

Patty Canova

In the latter part of his life, Jim felt drawn in a special way to serve the homeless, often considered the most humble among us.

Jim began making regular visits to the streets of Brockton offering packets with a \$10 bill, a Dunkin gift card, a prayer card, and most importantly, a spirit of love. He hoped his presence would be a reminder that we are all created by God and worthy of His love.

Being the true leader he was, Jim always invited others to join him along the way and this work became known as On the Street Ministry. Since Jim's passing, the work is being carried on by Shaun and Claire Teed, Kathy Flaherty, Ed and Dawn D'Alelio, Denis Concannon, Terry Orcutt, and others. To learn more, visit www.OnTheStreet.org

On the Street
Ministry

A Remembrance by Jay, a Grateful Friend of Jim's through On the Street Ministry

I was living in a fort in Brockton behind a strip mall when Jim Orcutt knocked on my door.

In the winter, Jim and his street ministry would walk through Brockton handing out blankets and socks, trying to encourage those living on the streets with resources and opportunities for recovery. When he saw my roaring fireplace, he was impressed by how well I was set up, but tried to encourage me to attend meetings and stop by his church.

What struck me was his genuine desire to offer me an avenue for recovery, his kindness, and hopeful spirituality. We talked

for hours and he left me with a Dunkin gift card, socks, and a feeling of spiritual desire I had not had for awhile.

A few years later, when I finally was on the path to recovery I encountered Jim again. He was speaking at the AA group I had been a member of for over a year. I did not recognize him at first, but when he spoke of his encounters with the homeless in Brockton I suddenly remembered that fateful day that was so instrumental in my recovery.

His spiritual encouragement made me understand how crucial spirituality is in recovery. According to the 12 steps of AA,

the second step is to "come to believe that a power greater than us can restore us to sanity."

Sitting in my fort in Brockton, God came to me through Jim Orcutt encouraging me to restore my sanity, to seek Him, and make a spiritual change.

Through prayer and being of service to other Alcoholics, I found my sanity again and seeing Jim reminded me of how far I had come and how much I wanted to give back as much as he gave to me.

To make the love of God known, through word and deed

An "On the Street" Reflection written by Jim Orcutt
Saturday Morning, May 27, 2023

The homeless are often like nomads. Unwelcome, they carry or hide all their worldly possessions and move from one resting place to another. Their bed is a piece of cardboard behind a dumpster or if they're lucky, a spot under a bridge. They seldom, if ever, hear a cheerful greeting but are often told, "Move on! You can't squat here!"

Homeless women are particularly vulnerable. They often enter into relationships for protection. Many homeless people (especially women) use "pay as you go" cell phones to stay connected to family, to search for support services and for emergencies.

"Annie" and "Carl" were trying to connect with us by text, "Please wait, we're

right around the corner. We're broke and starving." We saw Carl first. He was out of breath from running. "Thanks for waiting!"

We asked, "Where's Annie?" "She's coming...she's upset!"

Just then Annie arrived in tears. "Why do they have to be so mean?" she sobbed. Finally calming down, she told us what happened. Two street toughs had belittled and shamed her. "Go ahead Annie, run and beg for your handout. Be sure to bow and scrape to the nice church people so they can feel good about themselves."

"Annie," we told her, "We're going to fix those guys right now. Come on, gather round."



Huddled together, we prayed. "Dear Lord, soften their hearts and minds that they may be filled with your love and compassion. Oh Lord, may they too come to know the joy that comes from making Your love known to others."

And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." Luke 9:58

Jim and Terry lived Cursillo at the Holy Cross Retreat House in Easton in 1986. Cursillo rekindled their faith and inspired them to serve in God's name. Without it, there would be no My Brother's Keeper.

In 1999, Jim and Terry joined Deacon Dan Sullivan and Fr. Joe Callahan CSC to create a four-person administrative team to run the Retreat House. Jim worked as the Program Director until 2023 and over the course of 2 ½ decades, he helped lead more than 750 Cursillo, Matt Talbot, and Pre-Cana retreats for 25,000+ retreatants. Jim saw each retreat and guest of 'the House' as an opportunity to make the love of God known. To learn more about the good work of the Retreat House, visit www.RetreatHouse.org



**HOLY CROSS | ✠
Retreat House**

A Special Moment **Close to Christ** at The Retreat House

By Jim Orcutt, written May 2006



It was 5:15 Friday morning and I had just finished setting up the coffee in the foyer outside the Retreat House chapel. A Spanish man was standing by the literature table browsing through the AA pamphlets. I nodded and said, "Good morning, how'd ya sleep?"

"Not well," he replied. "I was in a room with two other men and they snored so crazy. I didn't sleep all night. I came all the way to this place from Pennsylvania and I haven't slept in twenty-four hours. I need to ask whoever is in charge if there's another room I can have."

Putting my hand out, I said, "My name is Jim. I can tell you there are no empty rooms but I might be able to help you. There's a reclining chair in my office. If you want to sleep there for a couple hours, I'll wake you in time for Morning Prayer at 7:45am."

His face broke into the most beautiful, peace-filled smile as he introduced himself. "My name is Jesus," he pronounced it Hyseues, in the Spanish manner. "Thank you so much, yes, I would like to go to this chair of yours."

A couple hours later I opened the door to my office and Hyseues, stretched out in the recliner was in a deep sleep. I sat at my desk and in a low voice quietly called his name, "Hyseues... Hyseues." Without moving a muscle Hyseues opened his eyes, looked directly at me, and again, there was that beautiful smile. "Oh, that was so good. I was worried I'd be so tired that I couldn't get everything from this retreat. Now, I will be able to listen without falling asleep."

I asked if he had ever been on a retreat before. "No, this is my first retreat. I came because I want to find out who God is. I read a psalm once where it said that God knows my name. I've always worried about what other people think of me and many of them don't even know my name. I have come to a point where I want to know, who this person is who knows my name."

I said, "He knows your name because He made you and He loves you very much." Hyseues stared at me intently for several seconds and said, "You don't know what I've done. How do you know He loves me?"

Under my breath I was praying for wisdom and guidance. I said, "Hyseues, do you have children?"

"I have a son who is thirty-five," he answered.

Looking into Hyseues' eyes, I asked, "What would your son have to do to make you stop loving him?"

He was quiet for a moment and then he said, "There is nothing he could do that would make me stop loving him."

I told him, "I believe you. You see, Hyseues, your inability to stop loving your son is the perfect reflection of what it means to be made in God's image. When we're made in the image of someone that means we're similar to him. Just as you cannot stop loving your son, God cannot stop loving you because you're His son."

Hyseues' appearance is such that it would be clear to anyone that he is a man who has seen and experienced a great deal of hardship. Although neat and clean, his 50-ish body is hard and lean. Tattoos of knives and unknown coded signs on his arms lead me to envision prison bars.

"Are you saying that no matter what I've done God still loves me?" he asked.

"No," I replied. "I'm saying, Jesus Christ says no matter what you've done our Father in Heaven still loves you."

Tears welled up in Hyseues' eyes. He started to speak but then had to stop to compose himself. Again he started to speak and again the words choked to a stop. Finally, slowly, almost in a whisper, Hyseues said, "I used to find a way to be alone... then I'd go to the blessed Mother and I'd ask her, 'Please talk to Him, talk to your son about me. I can't go to Him anymore. I've disappointed Him so many times. I've broken so many promises. I know He must not want anything to do with me anymore. Please, Mary, ask Him to forgive me. Ask Him to come back to me.'"

Tears streamed down the strong man's face, sorrow cut a path like furrows in his brown, weathered skin. I reached out and laid my hand on his shoulder and his sobs quieted.

"Hyseues," I asked, "Do you know the greatest sin of Judas?" He looked at me and replied, "Of course. He betrayed our Lord to those who killed him." "No, Hyseues, that was not Judas' greatest sin. His greatest sin was that he gave up on our Lord. His greatest sin was that he believed that his sin was greater than our Lord's ability to forgive."

The lines on his faced smoothed, just a bit, and then came the beautiful smile, "You mean He forgives me everything I've done?" he asked.

I answered, "Hyseues, He forgave you long ago. Last night, when you walked in the door of this Retreat House, Jesus looked down and with a big smile on his face He hollered, 'Dad, Abba, it's Hyseues, my brother, he's come home!'" "Please," I asked Hyseues, "try to understand... they're rejoicing in Heaven because you're here."

For a few minutes Hyseues sat and said nothing. Finally, he spoke and said, "I feel like, how do they say? Floating on the air."

"Hyseues, that feeling is the Holy Spirit. God has sent Him to comfort you."

Our Facilities



EASTON



DARTMOUTH

My Brother's Keeper Prayer

Lord—

*When I have food,
Help me remember the hungry.*

*When I lie in my bed,
Help me remember those who sleep on the floor.*

*When I have a warm home,
Help me remember the homeless.*

*When I have work,
Help me remember those without jobs.*

*When I experience the joy of giving to my children,
Help me remember the agony of those who must
watch their children go without.*

*By remembering,
Help me destroy my indifference,
And arouse my compassion.*

*Make me concerned enough to act in your name,
To help those who cry out to you for that which I so
often take for granted.*



MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

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