



Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone, Ordinary of San Francisco, priests, clergy, seminarians who received minor orders, and the three new FSSP deacons: (in front, l-r) Rev. Mr. Zachary Akers, Rev. Mr. Joshua Curtis, and Rev. Mr. Daniel Heenan.

Doctrine

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poverty, something which is freely chosen and which is positively virtuous; indeed, it is a way of perfection.)

We are, as Christians, solemnly obligated to feed the poor, not simply physically, but in all ways that are beneficial for their *complete* welfare. The poor have to be fed, to be sure, but if we give them only physical nourishment, the bread we pass out to them is tantamount to stone, for it is not by bread alone that man lives. If man is really to live, he must be nourished with doctrine—what the Son of God came to this world to teach us. There is poverty and there is poverty, and by far and away the most devastating, the most killing, kind of poverty is spiritual poverty, the kind of poverty which Mother Teresa saw so much of in the affluent West, and which was more depressing than the kind of poverty she had to deal with on a day-to-day basis in Calcutta.

Those things which are of ultimate importance cannot be neglected. They must be given first priority. If a man is

naked, is starving, is without a roof over his head, clearly it is the first order of business to feed him, to clothe him, to give him shelter, and if we fail to do that it avails nothing to say to him, in the words of St. James, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled.” But if we stop there, having fulfilled the man’s basic physical needs, we stop altogether too short, and we cheat the man of what he is most in need of, as one who is created in the image and likeness of God—food for the soul, doctrine, the truths of the faith. Faith without works, St. James reminds us, is dead, but works without faith are in the final analysis fruitless. There is no more radical way of missing the point than for a Christian to throw all his energies into the effort to eliminate physical poverty in the world, while leaving spiritual poverty intact. Bread will sustain the body, but it is only truth, the truth incorporated in the doctrine of the faith, that is sufficient for life of the soul, that will set the soul free, loosening it from the enslaving shackles of sin. †