

Martin de Porres House of Hospitality

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I Believe

Dear Friends,

Another year at Martins has flown by and we all ask each other constantly, "Where has the time gone?" We continue our practice of serving ten meals per week, showers twice a week, distributing health and hygiene products and a myriad of other services. We also host four Open Mikes a year, an annual memorial service, holiday meals and a trip to the ballpark.

In a corner of our dining room is an old upright piano that various guests and volunteers play. For the past nine years one of our volunteers comes in and entertains us with songs from all the decades. Many of our guests sing along as she plays.

It had been a devastating week. War and terror had escalated. A death in the community made grief very personal. Medical problems plagued everyone we knew. Despair, depression and darkness were our everyday companions. Through the rain into the dining room Gilda quietly walked to the piano and began to play and sing. *"I believe in every drop of rain that falls, a flower grows..."*

"Sure, sure." I heard an angry guest mumble under his breath, "I don't see no flowers, just rain; cold, wet rain!" *"I believe that somewhere in the darkest night a candle glows..."* Gilda's voice had risen above the doubt and anger. *"I believe for everyone that goes astray, someone will come to show the way. I believe. I believe."*

In the beauty and strength of her voice, at that moment, things hushed. All of us at Martins, both guests and volunteers, didn't know what to believe. The world outside our dining room seemed to have gone totally mad. Some of our basic faith had been shaken.

"I believe above the storm the smallest prayer will still be heard..." Another voice joined hers and, in a whisper, sang, *"I believe that someone in the great somewhere hears every word..."* more voices joining in. Clear and strong we all sang out together, *"Every time I hear a newborn baby cry, or touch a leaf or see the sky, then I know why I believe."*

In that healing moment we were all reminded of what we share intimately, together. The miracle of life. The challenges of suffering. The beauty in sharing. Outside the rain was pouring down but inside our little bit of heaven we all sang loudly, again, *"Every time I hear a newborn baby cry, or touch a leaf or see the sky..."*. We believed.

We did. For in that moment all doubt and despair was washed away. In the same way, for thirty-five years, people have come to Martins hungry and they have gone away full. That day, we were all filled to the brim with faith: a touch, a leaf, a cry, the sky, simple things. But it is our great faith in those simple things that we know connects us all and allows us to continue to Believe.

Thanks for your faithful, generous support. All blessings of love,

Barbara