

*The Justice and Peace Committee
Our Lady of the Lake Church
3508 NE 89th Street
Seattle, WA 98115*

June 21, 2008

Seattle City Councilmembers
Seattle City Hall
600 4th Ave.
PO Box 34025
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

Dear Councilmembers Licata, Burgess, Clark, Conlin, Drago, Godden, Harrell, McIver, and Rasmussen,

We are disturbed by recent City of Seattle actions directed at the homeless. Among those actions are sweeps of homeless encampments with the confiscation or destruction of shelters and personal property, limitations on overnight parking even in industrial areas to prevent automobile habitation, and the precipitous closure of motels that house bordering-on-homeless people in the North End.

Two aspects of the homeless problem seem clear to us. First, homelessness is not a problem that can ever be solved by punitive measures. As we see it, the majority of homeless are not that way by choice. Second, the number of homeless here as elsewhere is likely to grow considerably in the short term, a consequence, in large part, of the spending by our national government on war and weapons and of abuses by too many institutions within the financial sector. Those two points argue for a different approach to homelessness than the City of Seattle is now pursuing.

Rather than specific suggestions, we offer a prayer that you will look for and find, in the creativity and good will of the people in Seattle, fair and respectful ways to shelter (or find sites of shelter for) those most needy among us. Because homelessness has such harsh consequences for the least seen and represented of our brethren, we need your leadership in finding progressive remedies for the short and long-term homelessness that afflicts our city.

Sincerely,

Parishioners of Our Lady of the Lake Church