

All they want is an opportunity...

DARRYL

When Darryl Wood arrived at Emmaus House, "I was destroyed. I didn't want to go on living."

Darryl came from a small town in Virginia, attracted by bright lights of the city he saw on TV.

He came north eager to make the party scene and planned to live with a relative. That didn't work out, and he soon found himself out on the street.

"That gives you a jolt!"

Finding a bathroom, shaving, changing clothes, ordinary daily activities suddenly became huge problems to be solved. And he discovered the hard way that he had to sit up sleepless all night because as soon as he dozed off someone would try to steal whatever he had.

The Salvation Army sheltered him briefly, then referred him to Emmaus House.

In the 18 months since, "Emmaus House gave me back my dignity and self-pride."

He worked in the soup kitchen and in the office.

He picked up his education again, with Emmaus helping him find scholarship aid. In Virginia he'd had a year and a half of college. He recently completed a course in accounting and business administration at a business school. Now he commutes to Pace University to study social work.

It wasn't easy. "When you've been on the streets, playing catch-up is the hardest game in the world!"

But he plans to use not only the

formal education but the experience he got in the school of hard knocks. "I made a lot of mistakes; but I'm not bitter, and I don't regret them. I learn from them."

Darryl is involved in neighborhood outreach for Emmaus, meaning that he keeps in touch with the needs and concerns of the people there.

Outside Emmaus, Darryl darts

from one street corner to another. He's welcomed at each and has a few minutes of animated conversation. He's also keeping an eye out for one special youngster "who is kind of my godchild."

An old man comes up to him. Darryl talks to him gently, and then the old man reaches up and gives Darryl a hug. Darryl hugs him back.

Darryl also takes part in a feeding program for the homeless who live in Grand Central Station. "Even as late as last year," he notes, "most of them were middle-aged or older. Now they're teens and young people.

"And all they want is an opportunity, a chance. An opportunity was given to me. If each family would just adopt one homeless young person..."



Darryl stands on the back of the Emmaus moving service truck.

Living in solidarity with the poor

JOSEPH

He's a convert, and he's black. He's of the Byzantine Rite and an ikonographer. He's charismatic and Charismatic.

And he lives in solidarity with the poor as a member of the Emmaus House community in Harlem.

Joseph Mounsey's parents, who live in Huntington, sent him to St. Joseph's Academy in Newburgh "for the education and the discipline." He got that, but he also got converted to the Catholic faith in the fourth grade.



He attended Xavier High School in New York City and a high school for young professionals.

Then things started to go a bit awry. He became a disc jockey and "got into a very decadent lifestyle."

But again he was drawn to religion, this time to a priestly vocation. He entered the Ukrainian seminary in San Francisco.

At Sunday gatherings at the seminary, people often sought him out to tell him of their problems.

His spiritual director noted how people turned to him for help and how willingly he responded. Might he need a more active ministry than life in a monastery?

Joseph took part in various ministries outside of class. He served in St. Anthony's Dining Room and prayed with AIDS patients as part of the archdiocesan gay and lesbian ministry.

Eleven months after tonsure, the first formal step to priesthood, he still wasn't sure in what direction God was calling him. "Should I stay — and be antsy about it? Should I leave? Or should I take a leave of

absence?" After praying on it, he decided to take a leave of absence to seek the Lord's will for his life.

He went then to a parish in New Mexico, "where I was a pastoral associate with a very overworked priest." The priest, observing his interest in working with people, suggested he join either an active community or the diocesan priesthood.

Still seeking God's will, he spent a year at Covenant House, working with Father Bruce Ritter.

Then Father David Kirk, of Emmaus House — who had been looking for a prayerful black Catholic with a vocation to live in solidarity with the poor in Harlem — heard of Joseph. He was delighted to find that Joseph was also an Eastern Rite Catholic like himself and had started studies for the priesthood.

Last May, Joseph made a commitment of at least two years to Emmaus House. And after that? Joseph is willing to "wait on the Lord. We do that here. A lot," he laughs.

He's found it a profound experience to be a member of a community "and to consider your own

needs after the needs of the community as a whole. It's a struggle between holiness and selfishness."

He's been involved in construction work on the hotel and can point out the areas he did himself. He's just been appointed security chief for the community, "and I hate it," he adds wincing.

He has a room set aside for making ikons and recently finished an ikon of St. Paul. "That was a labor of love," he says. He made it for another member of the community named Paul who has impressed him by a constant unselfishness and cheerfulness.

The community's day begins with Divine Liturgy. Then there's work from 9 a.m. to noon; lunch; work again from 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Evening prayer at 5:30 p.m. is followed by dinner at 6 p.m.

"This is a very powerful place of prayer." Joseph points out that "that's the only way we can do this, the only way we can survive."

Celebration too is an important part of Emmaus life; and, he eagerly notes, "there are 12 major feasts in the Eastern Church!"

EMMAUS HOUSE

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