



ST. ROCH COMMUNITY CHURCH

THIS CHRISTMAS, GIVE THE GIFT OF DIGNITY

As the holiday season approaches, many people's thoughts turn to gifts. Retailers count on big sales to make up for slower months during the year and people

begin to assess how "big" of a Christmas they will be able to afford. The same is true for our neighbors in St. Roch and St. Claude, though with fewer resources often comes more stress. For families that struggle to provide the basics, the prospect of giving gifts can sometimes seem too overwhelming.

Bob Lupton, a friend in urban ministry in Atlanta, describes a scene common around Christmas time...

In the past, our ministry gathered lists of needy families with the names, ages, sizes, and requests of their children and matched them with families who would deliver on Christmas Eve a bounty of delicious food and wonderful presents...One year as we sat in the living rooms of the poor when the gift-bearing families arrived, we saw something that had escaped our attention before. The children, of course, danced with excitement at the stacks of presents arriving at their door. And the mothers were generally gracious to their well-dressed benefactors, though they seemed self-conscious and subdued. But the fathers, upon hearing the knock at the door, would disappear from the room and not return until the gift givers had departed. For the first time a darker side of our giving tradition became evident. I saw parents in their own homes, in front of their children, being exposed for their inability to provide for their families. Our system of kindness was destroying their pride.

While receiving free gifts through charity drives is well-intentioned and produces the same material result, it can often promote an entitlement mentality and can cut away at a person's honor, a sense of pride that comes with being able to provide enough for one's family. We want to respect the God-given dignity of our neighbors and aim to empower them, rather than gloss over needs through handouts. At the St. Roch Community Church Christmas Store, gifts will not be given away for free; rather prices will be significantly marked down. This will afford our neighbors the opportunity to stretch their resources while maintaining the dignity of providing for their families.

We want to invite you to give the gift of dignity this Christmas season. Would you considering giving a new, unwrapped gift for our Christmas Store? You can visit [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and click on "Gifts & Wish Lists." Type in St. Roch Community Church to see a list of requested items. We are accepting gifts for all ages, including, but not limited to: gift cards; coloring books, crayons, & markers; and sports equipment. If you would prefer to give a cash gift that will allow us to supply inventory for the store, please send a check to St. Roch Community Church and write "Christmas Store" in the memo section.

Gifts can be mailed to:
St. Roch Community Church
Attn: Christmas Store
PO Box 770950
New Orleans, LA 70117

Or dropped off at:
St. Roch Community Church
1738 St. Roch Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70117

Please ensure that all gifts arrive by November 29 as our store will be open December 6, 13, and 20.