



DAN CAPPELLAZZO/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Bishop Richard J. Malone blesses the Rodriguez/Gomez family of Myrtle Avenue, Buffalo, as he and Father Ryszard Biernat delivered meals to the homebound with Meals on Wheels for Western New York.

Bishop Malone delivers Meals on Wheels

Throughout the year, Meals on Wheels for Western New York is committed to providing nutritious food and a friendly visit to homebound clients around the region. In addition to helping meet these critical basic needs for their clients, the staff and volunteers at Meals on Wheels find ways to make birthdays and holidays a little more special for each client by sharing cakes, cards and other surprises throughout the year.

During the Christmas season, a tradition has developed in which Bishop Richard J. Malone and Father Ryszard S. Biernat join Meals on Wheels to visit numerous clients during regular meal deliveries. For the fourth year, the pair were eagerly received by clients who wanted to share a prayer and receive Holy Communion. Each client also received a handmade card and ornament created by children through a local religious education program.

One client, Carol Duffie, was so excited about the visit that it had her up early, just like a kid on Christmas morning. "I didn't want to miss the Bishop. I was up at 6 a.m. today," Duffie remarked joyfully, all smiles during the visit. "I love Meals on Wheels."

Jesus and Elisa Gomez even had two of their sons over for the special visit, and they introduced the bishop to their family. They told him how they had met, and Jesus proclaimed with pride, "We've been married for 65 years."

The staff and volunteers at Meals on Wheels love organizing these special experiences for clients and seeing the

happiness it brings them.

"A visit from the bishop and Father Biernat brings incredible joy during the holiday season, and we are so honored to be a part of providing this experience. We are grateful that they enjoy visiting with our homebound seniors, and we appreciate their support of the work that we do every day," Tara A. Ellis, CEO and president of Meals on Wheels for Western New York, said.

Bishop Malone says every year how much he enjoys delivering with Meals on Wheels for Western New York. "One of the most important things we do as Catholics is take care of our neighbors," Bishop Malone said. "I encourage everyone to find the time to volunteer and help someone in need."

Meals on Wheels for Western New York serves more than 3,600 homebound seniors and disabled individuals each year. This wouldn't be possible without the help of 1,600 incredible volunteers – 400 of whom are on the streets each day.

It takes just one hour to volunteer, and people can deliver as frequently or infrequently as they wish. Both drivers and servers are needed. With 25 sites throughout Western New York, volunteers can easily serve out of a site near their home, work or school (wherever they are mid-day). Volunteers routinely report that they get more out of volunteering than they give.

Learn more about volunteering and how you can make a difference at mealsonwheelswny.org/volunteer.

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