**BTC reflections 2016…..Claire**

**Sat June 25**…waking up at Pam’s and being served two mugs of coffee (obviously she knows me). Getting on my bike at 545 AM to bike to St. Bridgets….a first. Pam caring for me.

Wayne at Sparrow Ministry. Degradation of the human person

Bushnell Park. The lines for underwear. Basic needs not met for people.

Sacred Heart. Kind of a blur but met people that knew me as a child…the Hayes. Threads pulling through your life.

The frigidity of the pool. So cold but so necessary

**Sun June 26**…hard ride to Prospect but somehow we made it. The inability to understand the priest’s homily due to language barriers. the angry man wanting to blame single women for poverty. I know he clothed it in family disintegration but it was clear that he wanted to blame someone.

The welcoming at Holy Family; the mass…great vision of engaged church

The difficulty of discussing tough issues. Just unconditional…no conditions

**Mon June 27**….

Welcoming Maureen Stofira

Stop & Shop…people are so generous. People love to have you ask them their name. All people want to be affirmed.

Malta…so proud of the work of Malta, the way they treat people…each is important and helped the best way we know how.

East Hartford Family Shelter…first well oiled machine. Her quote…”We have to turn immigrants (undocumented people’ away”….

Think about it…if we are all a creature of God. what documentation could we possibly need.

Manna House - wrapped plastic ware. There was a right and wrong way…much attention to detail. It was incredibly hot there and we were so sticky but we carried on with a smile. The way they served the guests…no lines. Respect for all.

**Tues June 28**

Welcomed Fran

My Sisters Place…another “well oiled machine” . Had a corporate feel to it. Run by an ex CEO/President of a Torrington company

The senator’s office. Blumenthal’s office. little engagement; Murphy’s office. very engaged.

St Thomas…welcoming….God gave us the homeless man in the audience. “If you want to help the poor, ask the poor”. Good to see my husband again

**Weds. June 29**

To Guilford

Stopping at the Food Share of the Southern part of the state. Very corporate, another well oiled machine”

Long ride but beautiful town, great to see Fr Steven. Inspiring words from him. He really understood the need to change systems and to not just hand out more and more. He inspired each of us to keep going and know that God was with us. With lack of sleep and minimal muscle recovery, his words helped me to get back on the bike

**Thurs: June 30**

St Georges gourmet breakfast. Really ate too much!

Long ride. Very tired, but did my best

Got to UCAN but couldn’t keep my eyes open. Alta always identifies the brokenness of our systems and how she works to fix them but it is weary work.. It really feels like no one cares.

Back to St. Bridgets….honestly wanted to give up but Lou wouldn’t let me. Thanks Brother. The ice-cream was wonderful as I did not eat lunch for fear of not being to keep it down.

My overall summary is that poverty treatment is like what we do in the emergency dept. Put on a bandage and send them away. We really have not gotten to the stage where we heal the problem. As children are damaged by poverty we will have more and more anger and more and more violence. The elephant in the room is poverty but no legislator is really wanting to say the p word. Better to talk about middle class values and sending everyone to college for free. It is time to admit that we don’t feed our children in poverty well; we don’t house them well; we don’t educate them well and we don't look at them holistically. They are a lost number in a problem that has not really been addressed cohesively since President Johnson.

BTC cannot solve this alone but we must tell the poverty story over and over until there are enough indignant people who get it and then we will move to the tipping point. Prayer also is so necessary.