

Pastors Face Criminal Charges for Feeding the Homeless

A 90-year-old chef and two ministers are facing criminal charges for feeding hundreds of homeless people in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Chef Arnold Abbott, Rev. Dwayne Black and Rev. Mark Sims are accused of violating a new city ordinance that prohibits feeding the homeless in public.

The city ordinance took effect Friday, and the penalty includes a possible 60-day jail sentence and a \$500 fine.

On Wednesday night, police simply finger-printed Abbott at the scene and issued a citation. But this is the second time he has faced off with police in recent days.

Police also arrested them Sunday as they handed out food to homeless people in a park.

Despite some public outcry against the recent arrests, Fort Lauderdale Mayor Jack Seiler defended the law.

"The experts have all said that you're going to feed them, to get them from breakfast to lunch to dinner, all you're doing is enabling that cycle of homelessness. They don't receive the aid and assistance they need to receive," Seiler told reporters.

But Abbott said he won't stop giving food to the homeless.

"It's our right to feed people. It's our First Amendment right, and I believe in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man and we should be allowed to feed our fellow man," Abbott told reporters.

Abbott runs a nonprofit group called Love Thy Neighbor. Black

is pastor of The Sanctuary Church in Fort Lauderdale. Sims is pastor of St. Mary Magdalene Episcopal Church in Coral Springs.