

# *Lenten Reflections*

*March 2, 2020*



*St Francis Receiving the Stigmata – El Greco – Public Domain*

<https://art.thewalters.org/detail/6457/saint-francis-receiving-the-stigmata-2/>

I used to live and work in downtown Manhattan and if you've ever been to visit you know that on every turn it is very possible to encounter a homeless human. Often during my daily commute, like many New Yorkers, I found myself becoming bothered and even inconvenienced by yet another person begging me for money. When trying to survive the Manhattan hustle it is easy to get angry by the "beggars" being in our way as we rush to work and also to accumulate a mindset thinking "Can't they just get a job?"

Well, it wasn't until one morning on my daily commute when the person sitting next to me severely changed my mindset. She looked fatigued, her clothes were worn, and she smelled as if she hadn't showered in days. Typically, the norm is to just ignore "them," but on this day the person I was trying to avoid actually struck up a conversation with me. I was hesitant at first to engage, but eventually learned she was also on her way to work just like me. She had 3 children, a burdensome amount of debt, and had recently escaped serious domestic violence. She had been staying in a women's and children's shelter and then couldn't afford the minimum weekly payment so was asked to leave the shelter and found herself and kids on the street. I couldn't help her much that day but gave her whatever cash I had in hand and made it a mission to help those in need. As she left, I felt shocked. I realized that being homeless wasn't necessarily about not having a job, but rather being a victim of serious life changing circumstances that can completely alter our life overnight and possibly not being able to receive government assistance to afford a Manhattan lifestyle. I knew at this point I had to help in whatever way I could. Although it wasn't much, I began packing sandwiches in my purse and would walk around the city distributing them daily during my lunch breaks. Just to see each person's

shock and smile really brightened my day and made me feel like I made a difference.

So, when I moved into New Jersey I took on an even bigger mission to help as many large help centers as I could. I began contacting every help center in the area, collected large amounts of donations and set up appointments to distribute them. On every single visit I make a point to talk to some of the occupants because I feel there is so much to learn. I open myself to be a listening ear and encourage them as much as I can. The stories I learn from every individual are absolutely mind blowing. One family could have escaped domestic violence, while the person next to them was the CEO of a company who went bankrupt and suddenly could no longer afford their living situation. It was easy to suddenly understand that my “can’t they just get a job” mindset was absolutely mistaken and rather should have been set to “how can I help?”

Rich or poor we are all humans and we never know when our comfortable lifestyle can greatly be flipped upside down the next day. I hope this message will encourage someone to bring donations to a local shelter, ask how we can volunteer, and most importantly the next time we meet someone who may seem to have a less fortunate lifestyle than we do, have a listening ear and share encouraging support.

*Christine Melet, Assistant Director of ABSN Enrollment*

**Monday of the First Week of Lent**  
**Lectionary: 224**

**Reading 1**     [LV 19:1-2, 11-18](#)

The LORD said to Moses,  
“Speak to the whole assembly of the children of Israel and tell them:  
Be holy, for I, the LORD, your God, am holy.

“You shall not steal.  
You shall not lie or speak falsely to one another.  
You shall not swear falsely by my name,  
thus profaning the name of your God.  
I am the LORD.

“You shall not defraud or rob your neighbor.  
You shall not withhold overnight the wages of your day laborer.  
You shall not curse the deaf,  
or put a stumbling block in front of the blind,  
but you shall fear your God.  
I am the LORD.

“You shall not act dishonestly in rendering judgment.  
Show neither partiality to the weak nor deference to the mighty,  
but judge your fellow men justly.

You shall not go about spreading slander among your kin;  
nor shall you stand by idly when your neighbor's life is at stake.  
I am the LORD.

"You shall not bear hatred for your brother in your heart.  
Though you may have to reprove him,  
do not incur sin because of him.  
Take no revenge and cherish no grudge against your fellow countrymen.  
You shall love your neighbor as yourself.  
I am the LORD."

**Responsorial Psalm**     [19:8, 9, 10, 15](#)

R. (John 6:63b) **Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life.**

The law of the LORD is perfect,  
refreshing the soul.

The decree of the LORD is trustworthy,  
giving wisdom to the simple.

R. **Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life.**

The precepts of the LORD are right,  
rejoicing the heart.

The command of the LORD is clear,  
enlightening the eye.

R. **Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life.**

The fear of the LORD is pure,  
enduring forever;

The ordinances of the LORD are true,  
all of them just.

R. **Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life.**

Let the words of my mouth and the thought of my heart  
find favor before you,

O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

R. **Your words, Lord, are Spirit and life.**

**Verse Before The Gospel**     [2 COR 6:2B](#)

Behold, now is a very acceptable time;  
behold, now is the day of salvation.

**Gospel** [MT 25:31-46](#)

Jesus said to his disciples:

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory,  
and all the angels with him,  
he will sit upon his glorious throne,  
and all the nations will be assembled before him.  
And he will separate them one from another,

as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.  
He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.  
Then the king will say to those on his right,  
'Come, you who are blessed by my Father.  
Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.  
For I was hungry and you gave me food,  
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,  
a stranger and you welcomed me,  
naked and you clothed me,  
ill and you cared for me,  
in prison and you visited me.'

Then the righteous will answer him and say,  
'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you,  
or thirsty and give you drink?  
When did we see you a stranger and welcome you,  
or naked and clothe you?  
When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?'  
And the king will say to them in reply,  
'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did  
for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'

Then he will say to those on his left,  
'Depart from me, you accursed,  
into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels.  
For I was hungry and you gave me no food,  
I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,  
a stranger and you gave me no welcome,  
naked and you gave me no clothing,  
ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.'

Then they will answer and say,  
'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty  
or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison,  
and not minister to your needs?'

He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you,  
what you did not do for one of these least ones,  
you did not do for me.'

And these will go off to eternal punishment,  
but the righteous to eternal life."