The thought for this week is **Poverty**. When we think of poverty, we tend to think of giving up the things we love. But for Franciscans, poverty means detaching from that which holds us bound. It means surrendering to God’s will and letting go of our own will and want; especially those things that keep us from living Gospel values.

One day, while he was riding on horseback through the plain that lies below the town of Assisi, he came upon a leper. This unforeseen encounter struck him with horror. But he recalled his resolution to be perfect and remembered that he must first conquer himself if he wanted to become a knight of Christ. He slipped off his horse and ran to kiss the man. When the leper put out his hand as if to receive some alms, Francis gave him his money and a kiss. Immediately mounting his horse, Francis looked around; but although the open plain stretched clear in all directions, he could not see the leper anywhere. Filled with wonder and joy, he began devoutly to sing God’s praises, resolving from this always to strive to do greater things in the future…

From that time on he clothed himself with the spirit of poverty, a sense of humility and a feeling of intimate devotion. Formerly he used to be horrified not only by close dealings with lepers but by their very sight, even from a distance; but now he rendered humble service to the lepers with human concern and devoted kindness…

He visited their houses frequently, generously distributed alms to them and with great compassion kissed their hands and their mouths. [St. Bonaventure, Legenda Major]

Pope Francis exhorts, “Do not be afraid to go and to bring Christ into every area of life, to the fringes of society, even to those who seem farthest away, most indifferent.” And, Saint Francis tells us, “Remember that when you leave this earth you can take nothing of what you have received, but only what you have given: a full heart, enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice, and courage.”

**Psalm Fragment:**

“I maintain a pure lifestyle, so I can appear before your altar, O Lord, to give you thanks, and to tell about all your amazing deeds.” Psalm 26:6-7

**Reflection Question:**

What thoughts or beliefs are you attached to that keeps you from trusting in the presence of the divine in those you encounter each day?
**Action this week:**
Think about the “stuff” you are attached to or are having difficulty letting go of. Resolve to give one thing away to someone in need. Journal your experience.

**Prayer for the Week: **Sharing Abundance
O Creator of all living things:
We are all hungry in a world full of abundance.
The possibilities of food for bodies and souls overflow in this beautiful world.
We ask for the grace to see the abundance of our world and enough awareness to acknowledge our sins of greed and fear. Give us openness of soul and courageous, willing hearts to be with our sisters and brothers who are hungry and in pain.
We ask for your intercession on behalf of every person hungry for earthly food and hungry for the taste of the Spirit of God.
We give thanks that we can be part of that intercession.
This world is blessed with enough food of the earth for every person to eat and be satisfied.
We all can feed on the bread of Christ, through the Holy Spirit, as God makes a home in our hearts.
We come together in awe and wonder at the Creator who loves us so much that we are invited and urged to be co-creators with God in the care of our brothers and sisters.
In the name of the tender Mother-Father of all people who hears every cry, Amen.

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