

Spiritual Reflection – October 2014

“May the poor always enjoy [our friendship] and if they cannot always be helped ... then may a friendly glance ... help them to forget their hard lot for a few moments” (Mother Frances Streitel, Foundress of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, Norms 1883, 109, 2).

Ven. Mother Frances had a great love for the poor and those in need. She often focused her energies and time caring for those who came to her for advice or for a listening ear. As a highly intellectual woman she was aware that neither she nor her Sisters could address all the necessities of the people that they encountered within their ministries. Yet, Mother Frances, as seen in her quote, worked to instill in her Sisters the obligation to treat each person with human dignity and love. She realized that not everyone could be aided; yet, everyone should be able to feel they had been listened to. Mother Frances gave us a concrete behavior to practice in these instances – a friendly glance or stance. We are to treat all as friends.

In our world today we are being faced with many “ills of society” in which people are suffering and feel friendless – those minorities who find themselves forced on a mountain in Iraq, those suffering with Ebola and being forced outside of societal structures. We as Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother are probably not in a position to be actually present physically to those people most in need; yet, how are we supporting them spiritually? More to the point, who is the face of the poor that we will meet today – the person who has lost a loved one, who has run away from home, who has received word of a terminal disease, who is lonely and has no one to talk with, or someone who just needs a smile or a Good Morning! Am I going to be the person to give them that friendly glance or stance?

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