

The Least of These

Scripture Reading — Matthew 25:31-46

Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me. — Matthew 25:40

We saw him in the city of Chicago near the place where we were staying. His name was John, and he was homeless. His only means of transportation was a wheelchair. No matter how often he was invited to come inside or urged to stay at a shelter, he refused. The only thing he did accept was some change and some leftover food. Some people would label him a loser.

In today's parable the Lord Jesus uses a different name to describe millions of people like John. He calls them "the least of these." The unborn child; the person who is mentally or physically challenged; people who are homeless, or hungry, or refugees; people in prison; people who might never be able to live productive lives—all are among "the least of these." And Jesus does not mean these are lesser people, as if they were not as important as others. He adds that whatever we do for someone in need, we do it for him. As Mother Teresa of Calcutta put it, "When we look into the face of one of them, we see the face of Jesus."

It's not up to us to judge people like John, who was homeless—or anyone else who may face challenges or be at a disadvantage. Our task is simply to reach out and show Jesus' love. Ask the Lord today to open your eyes to see his face in the faces of people who are down and out, disadvantaged, or challenged in other ways. And pray for a willingness to reach out.

Prayer

Lord, help us to realize that whatever we do for people in need, we are doing it for you. Amen.

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