

I often ask myself if I would jump out of bed to help people each day, if I had not been given the gift of my job with the poor. I work at a non-profit mental health and substance abuse clinic. My job as front secretary allows me to meet each person entering the clinic. Tragic lives destroyed by incurable mental illness. Many of these people have lost everything because of drug and alcohol addiction. Everything, including health, home, job and family, children included.

Many have Aids. Most are homeless, hungry and dirty. One could say that these are the lepers of today's society.

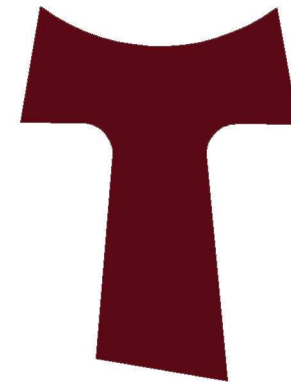
I could not deal with the demands, stresses and unpleasantness of these minute to minute encounters if I weren't sure that each one is Christ

Himself. I know that I can lose my job for sharing Christ with them, but He keeps me in His care. Each morning, I pray that I will not miss seeing Him in them, not miss a chance to help this Unseen Guest as He comes to me in disguise.

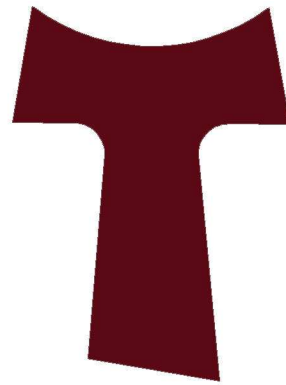
I live in the same neighborhood as the clinic, and I often see the "clients" in the stores and even at Holy Mass. One day, last summer, crossing a large parking lot, I heard someone call from a distance, "Marsha, I love you", and wave and smile. I was so blessed. I rejoiced that this mentally ill street person had felt Christ's love from me that I had been His instrument, and I called out, "I love you, too!" This man has since died, and I pray for his soul, and the souls of all our clients that overdose.

I have learned much about life, people and myself. I have learned that it *isn't* "them" and "us", it's just **us**.

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*Let them  
esteem work  
both as a gift  
and as sharing  
in the creation,  
redemption,  
and service of  
the human  
community.  
Article 16*



*Front*

*Desk*

*Secretary*