

# A Special Visitor Looking for Power

*Where are you looking for Power?*



Harvest Appeal 2017

The day was not so unlike many others for me at the Prayer Center, numerous appointments in and out of the Center and here I was making one more flying trip out at 3pm. The temperature was in the high eighties and I found myself finished with this last task at 4 pm with 2½ hours to go before needing to be at a class to teach that evening in Grand Blanc.

Hot and exasperated, I pulled off the road and sat quietly and just prayed a simple prayer. “Ok, so there’s only a couple hours left unaccounted for before class tonight ... what would you have me do?” I felt that I had not finished anything thus far this day. As I rested on the steering wheel, I heard God speak to my heart and say to me, “Go back to the Center, and do whatever you can.”

“Alrighty then ... I was just looking for some direction here, Lord,” and off I went back to the Center. I had no idea what would await me there.

As I pulled into the drive, I saw someone in a wheel chair under the sign at the street. I pulled in and stopped to watch as he fumbled with something near the ground. He was then quite alarmed to see me there watching him.

“Hello,” I said. “How can I help you?” ...  
“I’m so sorry. I’m very sorry,” he exclaimed, “I was just trying to plug in.”



“Hello,” I said. “How can I help you?” A very stunned and rather embarrassed man turned around in his chair and approached my car. “I’m so sorry. I’m very sorry,” he exclaimed, “I was just trying to plug in.”

I invited him to come closer and assured him he was in no trouble. He had no shirt on, and was beat red from the intense heat. His face was weathered, and his eyes told me a story that I knew would break my heart. It was then he told me his name, and I could see plainly that he had no legs past his knees and no fingers on his right hand. I guessed his age at about 76.

His chair was almost out of electricity and he was trying to charge it on the Prayer Center’s outlet at the base of the sign. Unfortunately, it did not work, and to make matters worse, he had been caught in the act. He was miserably embarrassed, and his loss of dignity was palpable.

“Follow me up the drive,” I said, “You can plug in on the deck, and sit in the shade while you recharge.” Off we went, my new friend and I, to sit in the shade. I forgot entirely about class that night.

There was something about his eyes...

For the next hour and half, I heard his story. Little by little I learned how life had been for this man who looked 76, but who, I found out, was only 57! Four years earlier, he had been homeless and was living on the street.

The cost was his legs and his fingers....

Five years earlier, he had a stroke – his closest family was an elderly mother in Kentucky. He was on his own.

Today, someone invited him to fish on the river not far from the Prayer Center. It was about 6 miles from his home. He used all his electricity to get there—and in the extreme heat, too. The guy never showed. Now he was stuck here and could not get home. The Prayer Center’s plug looked like an answer to prayer for him.



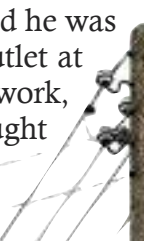
While he waited in the shade, I prepared some lunch and got a few cold waters from the fridge. When I returned with them, he had some questions of his own.

“What is this place,” he questioned, “and what am I doing here?” His eyes never left mine during these questions. The sun had spent him—he was exhausted, hungry and likely dehydrated.

“This is St. Francis Prayer Center,” I replied. “It is a special place to help special people, just like you,” I grinned. This brought a wide smile, but the eyes never left mine. It was almost disconcerting—those eyes, but I excused myself and prepared a bag of groceries that would fit over the handlebars of his chair.

I learned about his life, about who he had trusted and who had misused that trust. I learned about his fears of being unable to run away from or defend himself from those who stole from him and taunted him. He talked—I listened.

The scripture in Mathew 25:35-36, 40, floated through my mind about whatever you do for the least of them, you do for me. I asked permission to **pray** for him, and he obliged me. His eyes never left mine during the whole prayer. A strange stillness was between us. It was a special connection somehow. There seemed to be power in it.



*Continued on next page*

## The Two Shall Become As One Jackie Clark & Gabrielle

I met Jackie in the blustery winter of my first year at the Center. A fire had put her and her 3 children out on the street. Snacks from the refrigerator and cupboards bought us some time to get to know one another, and soon things began to change.



Jackie, Gabe & her 3 children.

She and her children have been friends of the Prayer Center ever since. We had the distinct pleasure of meeting her new fiancée, Gabrielle, last Christmas. This July they were married! God has blessed this young couple immensely. Very tough times and much adversity served to make ready this young couple for marriage. Congratulations Jackie and Gabe! We Love you! Jesus loves you!

## Angel & James

Years of caring for an aging mom and her new little boy, Isaiah, left little time for much else, but circumstances brought them to the Prayer Center one week before the Christmas party. A Prayer Center friend 'adopted' Angel and Isaiah and provided some much needed items and, more importantly, trust that there are people who really care and who will stand in the gap while getting back on your feet.



A lifelong friend came back into Angel's life, and this spring they were married!! Congratulations Angel and James Wiggins. We are so excited for your new life together!

## Garden Days!

We have set aside **Wed., October 4th and Mon. October 9th, from 11 am-3 pm** (both days), as garden cleanup days! We hope those of you who like to "play in the dirt" would be willing come out & get the gardens ready for Fall and Winter!

If you have some perennials to share, that would be greatly appreciated; such as: hostas, tulip bulbs, daisies, mums, & others. We are trying to have fewer annual flowers to plant come spring.

*How does our garden grow?* Check out the difference to our front entrance area from 2014 to now. Thanks to those of you who have worked so hard to keep our grounds looking wonderful!

Please let us know if you can make either day. Call the Prayer Center @ 810-787-5330 or email us @ [stfrancisflint@comcast.net](mailto:stfrancisflint@comcast.net).

## A Special Visitor ... *Continued from front*

He buzzed to the end of the driveway all charged up and I left for class.

In the days that followed, I wondered who had really visited me that day? Those eyes of my new friend didn't leave my mind for days.... I felt as if Jesus visited here that day in July. It reminded me that I must listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit 'many' times a day if I don't want to miss His directives for me.

We all need this special connection and power in our lives. The electricity needed for his chair was very helpful—but the power I felt, and that great stillness between us, was God's current of grace, of 'real power'.

As you receive this newsletter, we begin the busiest time of the year here at the Prayer Center. We serve dozens of whole families at Thanksgiving and Christmas time. It is important to us to serve the 'whole family.' At Christmas we serve them a meal, hot cocoa by the fireplace and gifts for the whole family under a 10' real Christmas tree. It's an opportunity to be 'family' with new friends and to share Jesus with them.

*Are you possibly able to help us this year?* We are attempting to put on a new roof and repair all our decks before the snow and ice hit, and take care of all of those who come to us for help. With God's grace and your generosity this will, indeed, happen!

May God Bless You,  
Debbie



Deb and Grandson.



Above:  
the before.  
At right:  
the after.





# Stations of the Cross

Director Deb is looking to form a Project Committee interested in planning and constructing the Stations of the Cross here at St. Francis Prayer Center.

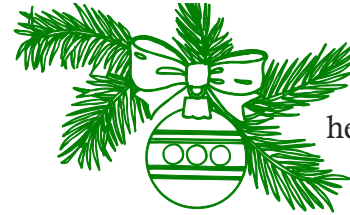
For our first meeting, we have scheduled *Wednesday, November 8* from 6:00-8:00 pm. If this is something you feel called to be a part of, please contact Jean @ the Prayer Center, 810-787-5330, or by email [stfrancisflint@comcast.net](mailto:stfrancisflint@comcast.net).

The 14 “stations” will give retreatants and others who visit a place of meditation.

Please pray about this and, if it is something you feel passionate about, lend your thoughts and encouragement to this project. You may have the “ideas” while others have the expertise – thinkers & doers will both be needed. Help make this vision become a reality.

# Christmas Decorating Help!

*We'll be decorating for Christmas – we could use your help?* Come join us **Sunday, December 3** from 1 to 5-ish for a **Pot Luck & Decorating** gathering. We



have the decorations – just need your to help put them up! Call the Prayer Center & let us

know if you care to spend a few hours with us decorating 810-787-5330.

# Adopt-A-Family Program

In addition to all the spiritual growth classes, healing masses, and ministry outreach; the Prayer Center sponsors an **Adopt-A-Family** program for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Thanks to the many, many people who joined us last year in making so many families more joyous during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. With all that help, we were able to sponsor about 35 families with Thanksgiving baskets and about 50 families for Christmas – both gifts & food.



A group from DeWitt will, again, be helping with food for our Thanksgiving baskets. **Lansing Catholic Central** will be helping again this year as part of their youth retreat here at the PC.

We often get food boxes from Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, then add fresh produce and dairy products as funds allow. You can help by purchasing a turkey for Thanksgiving or hams and turkeys for Christmas. We do have freezer space if you find one on sale. Our **adopted** families greatly appreciate your kindness. May each of you be blessed!



## Adopt-A-Family Program.

If you would like to participate in this outreach, please give us your **name, address, phone number** and the **size of family** you are willing to sponsor. We will match you up with a family of that size or smaller.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/St/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Thanksgiving.** I would like to sponsor food for a Family size up to:  2;  3;  4;  5;  6;  7; or  will provide a turkey

**Christmas.** I would like to sponsor  just gifts or z food & gifts for a Family size up to:  2;  3;  4;  5;  6;  7;

I wish to just make a donation \_\_\_\_\_

Please send your information to [stfrancisflint@comcast.net](mailto:stfrancisflint@comcast.net), mail in this form, or call the Prayer Center @ 810-787-5330. Please leave a message if we are unable to answer.

**You just lost your job; your car needs some minor repair; you cannot pay all of your utility bill because your son or daughter had to go to the doctor; your rent is due but you had your car repaired so you can still get to work – where do you go from here?**

## **WHAT CRITERIA DETERMINES A POOR PERSON?**

**One of the Prayer Center's major responsibilities is to pray with people. Our Welcome sign says Prayer Center. The fireplace banner is from Isaiah 56:7: "My house shall be called a house for all people."**

We've all read about or saw pictures of "visions" of the poor. But the thing that keeps a person from being poor may be a borderline definition at best. Those situations mentioned above can be extremely devastating to someone living on a VERY tight budget.



What happens when you reach into your wallet only to find nothing left?

What do you do if you find you no longer have a home to live in ... or you choose to fix your car rather than pay your rent ... or take a child to the doctor rather than pay a utility bill ... what then?

### **Falling Between the Cracks**

Many of the people who come to our door have been to other agencies and been turned down – they don't fit the criteria. They either make too much or have "used up" whatever assistance has been afforded them.

We choose to look at each case and make our determination from that. These are the people who *fall through the cracks* of most other agencies.

And, yes, sometimes we send people to another agency that is better equipped to help them with something.

You have a chance to help those individuals and families who come to us in desperation for that ONE bit of help that will let them breathe a little easier. Please use the enclosed envelope to make a donation to St. Francis Prayer Center. Your gift can be designated for our General, Ministry Outreach, or an area



of your choice – all are in need of support.

Our apologies for using some repeat pictures, but the ones we would like to show would be insensitive to someone in need – and not by their own choice.



You have probably been aware of homeless people who try to find a place to sleep. Some of them sleep in their cars – others use cardboard boxes. Have you ever found yourself saying, "*But for the Grace of God go I.*"? I have too. We often dismiss the poverty of others because we do not have to deal with it every day. There are many other situations that seem to bring those words to mind but more often it's when we meet someone or a family in a desperate situation. **But for the Grace of God go I.**

Are there some who scam the system? Of course.

We try our best to interview and ask specific questions to help determine the need. But just knowing that our God is a **forgiving God** lets us know that whatever someone does in that regard, it is not for us to judge.

Help us make the life of those we touch a little easier.

Please consider making a donation to the Prayer Center to help us maintain, not only our presence in the spiritual growth area, but our *Ministry Outreach* as well.



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**Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. (Psalm 136:1).**

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# HARVEST APPEAL

Dear Prayer Center Friend,

Our Harvest Appeal is directed towards a number of things including spiritual growth, ministry outreach, and operating. In order for all of these areas to be successful, it's important to get the support of our members, churches, and community.

Our recent "Raise the Roof" campaign was a wonderful success. We have contracted to have the roof over the two story portion of the Prayer Center replaced – a very much needed project! We thank all of you for contributing to this success. The Deck Fund is now being built up.

The enclosed remittance envelope is for your convenience to consider giving generously to our annual appeal.

Our ministry outreach funds have been used to help a family get their old car repaired, help to obtain a birth record, help with utility bills – many facing a shut-off notice, or helping with school clothes. We **are** an agency for the MEAP (Michigan Energy Assistance Program) out of St. Vincent de Paul in Detroit, but those funds are only available from November to May.

Our needs are many, our resources limited.

## Prayer Center Need List

- Clean, used mattresses, beds, dressers, blankets and sheets.
- Furniture, small household items/ lamps/dishes/tableware/pots & pans

### *Special Helpers Needed...*

- For assembly of and help with Thanksgiving baskets
- For assembly and help with Christmas baskets & assisting @ party on Dec. 16
- Food Pantry Volunteers and Director
- Food Prep/Serve People for upcoming Retreats Sept. 29-Oct.1 & Nov. 10-12
- Garden Days - *see page 2*

## Food Pantry

We are discerning the possibility of opening a food pantry here at the Center. If this is to occur, we would need to have someone who would volunteer to head up the program and others who would be willing to volunteer periodically to hand out food. We do have a person who does this on a large scale who is willing to come and set us up and actually train the persons who are willing to serve this pantry. Please pray to see if God may be calling you to help St. Francis in this way.



## ST. FRANCIS PRAYER CENTER

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### Newsletters by E-mail

To receive your newsletter by email (PDF format) rather than hard copy, please send a request via email to [stfrancisflint@comcast.net](mailto:stfrancisflint@comcast.net).

#### September 30 - October 1.

Sign up for *Knowing the Shepherd* Weekend Retreat. Call the Prayer Center at 810-787-5330.

## Past & Upcoming Events @ the PC

We have recently updated our web site with upcoming events. Please check it out. Since the arrival of our newsletter to your mailboxes (snail or email) may take place after some of the noted events, we still wanted to let you know how busy it has been here at the Prayer Center.

- In **August** there were retreats held on 3 of the 4 weekends. Pilgrim's Way classes were being held 2 nights a week at Holy Family in Grand Blanc.
- In **September** the Triumph of the Cross was held in Mio. In **mid-Sept.** A Meditation Retreat for Christ the King was held.
- **September 30 - October 1.** Originally a Reunion Retreat for past participants of the **Leadership School** – *Knowing the Shepherd*. Now open to others. Call the Prayer Center to register, 810-787-5330 or you can email us at [stfrancisflint@comcast.net](mailto:stfrancisflint@comcast.net).
- In **October**, Director Deb will be going to the Gaylord Diocese to offer a weekend Retreat.
- Meanwhile Pilgrim's Way classes continue at Holy Family in Grand Blanc.
- **November 4** is the Women's Conference in Lansing, an all day event.
- **November 10-12.** The Michigan Service Committee will be in retreat at the Prayer Center.
- **November 18.** Veneration of Fr. Solanus Casey, OFM Cap. Detroit. First American male saint.

- **November 8** is the first meeting of people interested in working on the Stations of the Cross at the Prayer Center from 6-8 pm. Call us if you are interested.
- **November 20** from 1-4 pm families will be picking up their Thanksgiving Food Baskets. Lansing Catholic Central Youth will be on Retreat that weekend and will help filling and handing out the baskets.
- **November 20** is a Healing Service at Holy Family in Grand Blanc from 6-9 pm.
- **December 3** is our Christmas Decorating & Pot Luck from 1-5ish pm. Help us put the Prayer Center in a joyous Christmas mode!
- **December 16** will be the Annual Family Christmas Party at the Prayer Center for our adopted & those who adopted them. It's not too early to "adopt" a family. Please see the form on page 3.

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