

## “INNERSTAND”

I once listened to a very reputable”awoken” speaker. And he said that most people can not handle the true answer. Most people look for what’s comfortable. They look for what they control.

For instance, if you are in a conversation with someone, and they ask you, “who are you?” “Where are you heading in life?” Simply answer them truthfully and say, “ I am no one going nowhere. I am a piece of the universe pretending to be a person that’s talking to another piece of the universe, that’s pretending to ask me about my life .... “ I found that fascinating, and understand it completely.. we are here in an experience that was given, written, and produced by God. Although we have a “choice” but the consequences for those choices, wether good or bad will ultimately be part of God’s will. It is his story. We are but characters sent to play a part. Growth and evolution are the name of the game. So the question is... “What did you learn?”

-SWANDA STEWART

Ways to Prioritize Your Mental Health

Mental health conditions affect millions of Americans each year. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), 23.4% of U.S. adults experienced mental health conditions in 2024 (61.5 million people). This represents more than 1 in 5 adults. 5.6% of U.S. adults experienced serious mental health conditions in 2024 (14.6 million people). This represents 1 in 20 adults. Statistics show that mental health conditions specifically affect our communities in America. In 2024, 18.1% of people experiencing homelessness in the U.S. had a serious mental health conditions. Across the U.S. economy, serious mental health conditions causes \$193.2 billion in lost earnings each year. Schizophrenia, although only affects -1% of Americans, led to an excess economic burden of \$343.2 billion in the U.S. in 2019.

Having a mental health condition can make it challenging to live everyday life and maintain recovery. But as a peer support specialist with lived experience with a mental health condition, I know that recovery is possible. By prioritizing your mental health and taking the necessary first steps to get treatment to manage and maintain your mental health, you too, will begin your recovery journey.

I am a peer supporter that specializes in health & wellness. Prioritizing your mental health is essential to your health and well-being. Some evidence-based strategies to improve your mental health include: consult a psychiatrist for medication to treat your symptoms if needed, consider talk therapy from a psychologist with a goal for treatment in mind, and reach out to support groups and peers who can support you on your wellness journey and validate your experiences. Limit alcohol and substance use because these can worsen mental health symptoms. Begin a physical activity routine that you enjoy, eat a healthy diet, get enough sleep, engage in enjoyable hobbies to reduce stress, practice mindfulness- meditation, yoga or breathing techniques to regulate your nervous system, practice gratitude, connect with your friends and family regularly, set realistic goals, learn your triggers or warning signs of mental decline, and get help when needed. There is hope and recovery is possible.

To your health!

M. Dunn

By M. Dunn

## STREET VOICES

### St. Francis Breadline Franciscan Bread for the Poor COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

V5 N44 ■ OCTOBER 2025

If you have any content to share for our newsletter please see one of the breadline staff. **We are in need of content such as a poem, lyrics, writing, thoughts, questions, image of your artwork or anything uplifting or informative.** Anyone who contributes content for our newsletter will receive a \$10 gift card.

**The St. Francis Breadline and this publication is made possible by the Our Lady of Guadalupe.**

### FRANCISCAN 360 IS OPEN!

**WHAT:** Case Management, Computer Access, Mailing Address, Health Clinic

**WHERE:** 144 W. 32nd Street

**WHEN:** Monday - Thursday, 9am - 4pm  
Scheduled appointments only on Friday from 9am - 4pm

**WHO:** All are welcome!

**NEW:** Art and Guitar classes, Work space available Tuesday 9am - 11am

**Good Morning!** This week have trivia questions submitted by Smokey, bible verse provided by Cora Shaw, writing from Kevin F., writing from Jane Farmer, writing from Rodney Wise, a scripture reflection from Mercedes Daniels, a short story from Rhyan Scorpio-Rhys, a writing from Swanda Stewart, writing from S. Lyons, writing from Derrick Lola, artwork from Carol O., and M Dunn.

*Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.”[a] Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.*

PHILIPPIANS 2:14-16

Scripture provided by Minister Cora Shaw

**Be the first person to correctly answer all three trivia questions and win a gift card.**

Who was the first running back to achieve 2000 yards?

What quarterback was the first to throw 5,000 yards in one season?

What football team has the most hall of famers?

**Answers to last weeks trivia questions.**

What football team was formerly known as the Frankford Yellow Jackets? Answer: Philadelphia Eagles

Who was the NBA MVP in 1976, 77, and 80? Answer: Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

What arcade game became a hit in 1973? Answer: Pong



Today’s Bible verse is Psalms 112:1

*“Praise the LORD.  
Blessed are those who fear the LORD,  
who find great delight in his commands.”*

Christians are blessed people. The people who know and believe that Christ died for our sins are the ones who are saved. Nothing can really hurt us if we have God by our sides. The ones who believe constantly have the most powerful guardian angel looking after them, God. Follow his commandments, follow the word, live by God’s rules and you WILL be blessed.

- MERCEDES DANIELS



## Seasons

Its the fall season presently when the leaves change colors and will soon fall from the trees! Peoples behaviors change when the seasons change. Summer is over people are preparing for cool weathers and the upcoming holidays! This is the beginning of giving and festivities for everyone. People are being helpful More so than anytime of the because people are more need of assistance so they reach out even more! Be one that practices this behavior help the unfortunate anyway you can no matter high big or small! Reach out!

-KEVIN F



## GRACE

The Bible says that we are saved by grace through faith. (Ephesians 2 8-9). Even people who are not God’s children, God hovers His grace over there lives. God is so merciful that he allows some people to live very long lives on this earth, to show that he not only loves them but, he is showing His grace towards them as well. The end is not yet. But, the Bible speaks about that there is gonna be a time when things are going to get rough and His grace is not going to be the same anymore. (Read book of revelations). People ignore the signs of the times. God’s GRACE is real my friend. Take the opportunity when His grace “Knocks” at your heart.

- RODNEY WISE

## Kindness

Kindness can be challenging at times. We’re all human and experience a wide-range of emotions. We can’t be expected to be entirely happy and serene 100% of the time. God certainly doesn’t expect that level of perfection from us. He knows we (hopefully) try our best to treat our brothers and sisters with the love and understanding He commands, though we can sometimes fall short. External factors such as our environments and our peers and acquaintances can have an influence on our behavior. If you’re constantly residing in the domain of stress or one with a lot of anger and other negative emotions, you probably won’t be at your best, emotionally-speaking. Who you surround yourself with, whether willingly or unwillingly, also has a strong influence etiquette when dealing with others. If we aren’t befriending those who exhibit kindness, gratitude, and other behaviors expected of us by God, we are less likely to display those behaviors ourselves. There are certain people that we, for the most part, have no choice whether we associate ourselves with them or not, but in matters we are in control of we should do our best to select those who exemplify the love of Christ to the best of their abilities so that we may model their good will ourselves. We all have off days. Sometimes we’re overstimulated and overwhelmed and find it difficult to maintain our composure when aggravated, but it’s important to remember that just as we’re human beings who are imperfect, so is the other person or people we’re dealing with. It’s best to keep in mind that oftentimes the person on the receiving end of our ire meant no harm towards us. We ourselves often irk those around us unintentionally and should be mindful of how we’re treating others regardless of personal internal grievances. While we all have bad days, true kindness is reflected in how we treat others when we aren’t feeling our best. It’s easy to reflect good behavior when you’re feeling good, but your character truly shines through if you’re capable of being good-hearted when it’d be easier to be inconsiderate and short. Think about the type of person you want to be in this life. Think about the type of person God wants you to be in this life and reflect that individual to all who cross paths with you in this life.

-JANE FARMER

**W**ell, where do I start? I am a 29-year-old trans female homeless living in NYC, which honestly is the worst thing to ever happen. Also going through lots of other health issues really builds me and my faith towards God and the ones I love the most. I am so thankful for St. Francis for finding me, a lost soul with no one, nowhere to go for me as me. I was born in Russia and very bullied my whole life, especially moving to NYC. However, coming to church more and more has made my faith grow more every day and I couldn’t be more stoked.

Growing up in Alaska and moving around, you meet so many people that change your life for better or for worse but just know God will always have your back and guide you through the ups and downs. I always make sure you are where you need to be. I got through PhD and NYC because I truly found him after I thought it wasn’t possible.

If you’re going through it, just know someone somewhere else is going through the same exact thing as you. So have faith and keep your head up. Amen.

- S. LYONS

## The Lesson I Didn’t Want

I’m not proud of this, but I’ve spent most of my life refusing help. I’ll give it — food, time, even money I barely have — but receive it? Never. I was raised to believe that needing help meant weakness. That asking was shameful. That standing tall — even when you’re breaking — was noble. That’s pride, dressed up like dignity. One evening I was struggling with a heavy box outside the shelter — stubborn thing slipping from my arms, cutting into my hands. A man sitting nearby — someone who sleeps on cardboard — stood up and said, “Let me help you with that.” And without thinking, I snapped: “I’ve got it.” He didn’t walk away. He just waited. Calm. Patient. Like he knew I didn’t. The box slipped again. This time he caught it before it hit the ground. I expected him to smirk. To say, “Told you so.” But he didn’t. He just said, gentle as a prayer: “You don’t have to carry everything by yourself to be strong.” Then — as if he hadn’t just cracked open my whole world — he lifted one side, and together we carried it in silence. That night, I couldn’t shake his words. I had spent years trying to be unbreakable. He showed me I was just unreachable. And that’s when it hit me: If I refuse to receive, I rob someone else of the chance to give. If I cling to pride, I shut the door on mercy — both ways. So this is my confession: I thought I was the helper. Turns out I was the lesson. And I thank God I learned it from someone the world underestimates — because that’s just like Him, isn’t it?

-RHYAN SCORPIO-RHYS



Painting “Three Violins” by Carol O.