

**M**y name is Yolanda. I am a mother, and my children are the light of my life. My oldest is Ashanti. I gave birth to her on August 27, 2010, and from that day on, my life changed forever.

My life has not been easy. I've experienced violence, loss, and circumstances I wish I could change, but I can't go back. All I can do is move forward. Right now, I'm trying to do better for myself. I have dreams of opening a funeral home one day and building something meaningful, something stable. I want to surround myself with better people, positive energy, and opportunities that will help me get on the right path financially and emotionally.

Lately, it feels like there's a weight hanging over my head, like I'm constantly under pressure with no clear way out. I'm dealing with too many challenges at once, and being surrounded by negativity makes it even harder. I truly believe that if I were in a more positive environment, my life could begin to change.

Living on the streets and in shelters makes everything harder. I've been in the shelter system for about four months now, after having my own apartment for seven years. During that time, my landlord was taking my checks and collecting rent for months but still refused to give me my apartment back. That loss has been devastating.

On top of everything else, my mother is battling cancer. She has gone through chemotherapy four times, and she is still here, she is a survivor. I am incredibly grateful for her strength and her love. She is currently caring for my 15-year-old daughter and has custody of her, and for that I am thankful beyond words.

I've been through a lot, but I am trying. I'm trying to change my life, break cycles, and move forward despite the pain and setbacks. I don't want to make this too long, but I wanted to share my truth.

My name is Yolanda. Nice to meet you.

- YOLANDA

**S**o we can finally say 2026 has officially started. One month down and eleven to go. The weather has been dreadful and a setback for me. But I'm not letting that discourage me from accomplishing what I need to accomplish. I'm staying warm and hope everyone else is too. This winter has been an icy cold one; it reminds me of old NYC. I just want to take this time out and give thanks where thanks is needed, and that's to the great men and women of St. Francis. Believe me without them most of the things that I am accomplishing wouldn't have come in existence. I appreciate the staff so much for going out their way for me in this time of need. There's no road map or user manual when you are going through things like this. Whether it be hunger or homelessness, but I swear the staff there will help you the fullest. And if they don't have the answers they will guide you every step of the way to find the right answer. It has been such a blessing to meet so many wonderful people that genuinely care and love you and love what they do. They show up everyday with the same warm and welcoming smile, no matter what they have going on in their lives. That shows loyalty and dedication and people like that need to be thanked. So thank you to the men and women of St. Francis and your work is much appreciated. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I made it because you were a helping hand. God Bless you all.

- JAY WEBB

The cupboard's bare,  
icebox empty,  
A worried thought in my mind  
But then I think, a place I know,  
Where help can be find and  
hope can grow.

The pantry waits, friendly staffs  
With shelves of food and so  
much more.  
A can of beans, some rice  
and bread,  
A welcome gift to make  
things right.

No empty plate, no hungry fear,  
A little help is always near.  
The pantry's there,  
a helping hand,  
To nourish bodies in the land.

- HENRY YEE

I know you're there when dawn begins to paint the skies with color high above my head. I know you're there when birds begins to sing?

I Know You're There!

Beyond the river's bend.

I know you're there beyond the slightest doubt. So many times I've felt your presence when doubt blocked the way or when a bridge was out and once again you helped me on again. And through the years when it may well appear I walk alone and there are none to care. Dear lord. What breathless joy to turn around and find you there?

- JOHN DAVID

# STREET VOICES

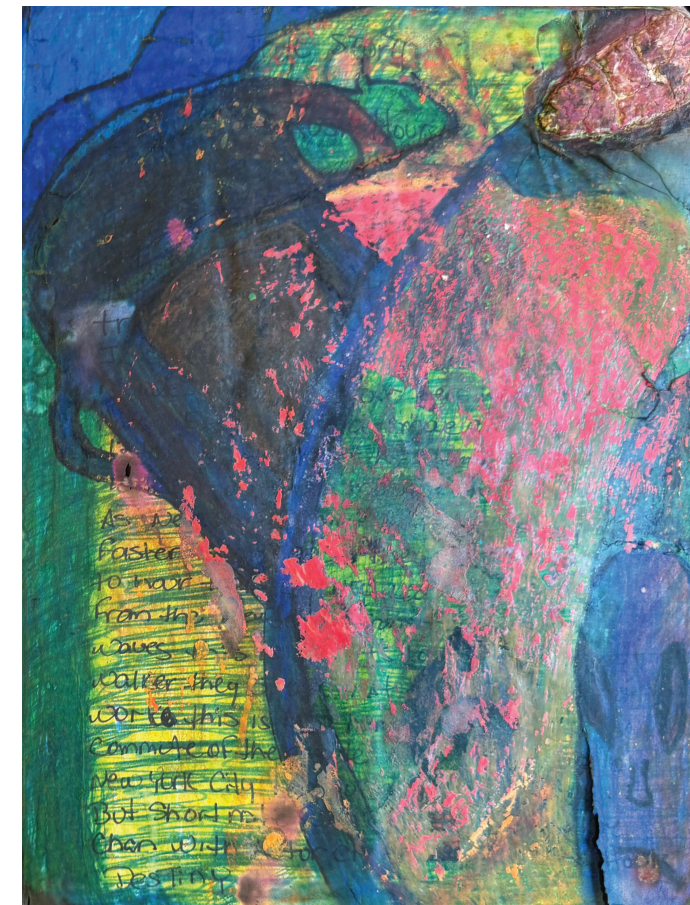
Franciscan Bread FOR THE POOR, Inc. • St. Francis Breadline

Volume 6 Number 5

FEBRUARY 2026

Community Newsletter

**Good Morning!** This week we have writing from John David, SL., work from an anonymous contributor, writing from Yolanda, Jay Webb, Darnell Davis, Rodney Wise, and Rhyan Scorpio-Rhys, poetry from Henry Yee and artwork from Lola Derrick and Honesty.



Pastel by Honesty

*Listen, my dear brothers and sisters:  
Has not God chosen those who are  
poor in the eyes of the world to be rich  
in faith and to inherit the kingdom he  
promised those who love him?*

JAMES 2:5



## TRIVIA QUESTIONS!

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

Which NBA player holds the record for playing an entire 14 seasons without fouling out?

What NBA player was the first to earn a million dollars in a single season?

Who led the NBA in assists in 1967-1968?

**Answers to last weeks trivia questions.**

Which chess piece can never move backward?  
The Pawn

Which language has the most native speakers in the world?  
Mandarin Chinese

Which U.S. state has the longest coastline?  
Alaska

## FRANCISCAN 360 IS OPEN!

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

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

**WHEN:** Monday - Thursday, 8:30am - 4pm  
Scheduled appointments only on Friday from 9am - 4pm

**WHO:** All are welcome!

If you have any content to share for our newsletter please send content to [streetvoicesnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:streetvoicesnewsletter@gmail.com).

**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 Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe.**

**F**eelings can be powerful and certain feelings can come rapidly and unexpectedly. How we react to certain situations can inadvertently reveal our states of mind, our values, what we might be emotionally lacking in, and the level of faith we have in the Lord. Are you calm, cool, and collected when trouble arises or does the mere prospect of adversity send you spiraling? Think about how you've reacted to hardships in the past. You survived to tell the tale and now have an opportunity to reflect and grow from your past actions. We have to keep the Lord at the forefront of all that we do. It is through Him that we conquer our fears, overcome all of the obstacles that life throws at us, and emerge the victor in each battle we fight. With God at our sides, what barrier is impossible to overcome; what hurdle is too high to jump over? We owe it to ourselves to improve our relationships with the Lord and put all of our faith in Him. When we are feeling down and need to be brought back up, we must turn to Him. When we find ourselves feeling defeated, we must pray to Him for the strength to persist. No amount of anger ought to cause us to overreact to a situation that will pass. No amount of sadness ought to cause us to spread misery. No amount of anxiety ought to cause us to make hasty, irrational decisions. Any and all negative emotions we experience are temporary and apart of the human condition. But it is God who ensures we overcome all adversity. It is He who throws at us what He knows we are capable of handling with the intention of growing our immortal souls and it is He who sees us through every conflict. All things are possible through Him.

- ANONYMOUS

## Magnitude of Sins...

We often experience sinful moments in our lives that leave us contemplating the magnitude of the wrongful act we committed... We even start to believe that what we did is not that bad despite the irony being "it's still a Sin" despite its title or effect! Many of us truly believe that "God" disciplines and punish us (Humans) Based on the degree or grade of a sin! We must not allow ourselves with the false prophecy that the least severe the sin "the lighter the punishment"... our moral should encourage us to believe that "A sin is a sin"... No matter the "effect" we must repent with our sins "In the same repent as before... We must seek the same forgiveness for each and every sin... forgiveness is an attitude of the strong "it free's the forgivers"... all Sins Require the same amount of "forgiveness"... Free yourself from being imprisoned by your sins! Repent properly for all Sins.... Amen

- DARNELL DAVIS



Drawing by Lola Derrick

Seen, even at the Bottom  
 I wonder what life would be like if it were reversed,  
 if I were on top instead of the bottom.  
 It sounds great, almost like a dream.  
 And maybe that's exactly what it is.  
 Still, I'm thankful for who I am and what I carry.  
 No one can take that from me.  
 Sometimes I imagine myself on top of the world,  
 but I'm always pulled back to wondering  
 what it's like to live at the bottom,  
 because that's where I am right now.  
 Down here, your voice isn't heard.  
 You're not seen.  
 You're invisible.  
 So invisible that no one really sees you for who you are.  
 That's where I stand.  
 But I am not invisible.  
 I am here.  
 I am who I am.  
 With all the hatred in this world,  
 it's easy to lose sight of yourself.  
 I do it more often than I want to admit.  
 But I'm not going to let them win.  
 I'm not going to let the devil win.

- SL

Today's Bible verse of the day is: 1 Corinthians 2:9

*"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived-  
 what God has prepared for those who love him..."*

God has great things planned for His children. This is a hard life that we're living because a lot of us are homeless or struggling or don't have a lot of money, but if you keep believing in GOD, when you die, there will be a great heaven waiting for you to enter. And when you enter heaven, it will be beyond anything your mind could ever think of on this earth. Keep loving God and you will be rewarded!

## Charity Is Not Being Nice

Charity gets misunderstood because we've reduced it to "being nice." Being polite. Being pleasant. Dropping something in a jar and moving on with a clean conscience. But in the Christian sense—Franciscan especially—charity isn't decoration. It's fire. It isn't a mood. It's a decision to love with your life. Charity is not "I'll help you, as long as you're easy." Charity is love that stays when it gets inconvenient. It's also not the same thing as pity. Pity looks down. Charity stands beside. Charity says, You are not a problem to solve. You are a person to love. And it doesn't only show up in dramatic acts. A lot of the time, charity looks painfully ordinary: Holding your tongue when you could humiliate someone. Returning a message you don't feel like returning. Apologizing without attaching an explanation that protects your ego. Listening all the way to the end of someone's story without rushing to fix it. Francis didn't romanticize charity. He let it cost him something. He embraced a life where love wasn't an extra—it was the whole point. So this is the test I've been using lately, and it's humbling: Am I giving in a way that keeps me comfortable, or am I loving in a way that makes me more like Christ? Because charity isn't measured by what we give away. It's measured by what we refuse to withhold: patience, forgiveness, presence, compassion—especially when we think the other person hasn't "earned" it. That's the kind of charity that changes a life. Sometimes the other person's. Often, ours.

- RHYAN SCORPIO-RHYS

## THE POWER OF TEMPTATION

This has been a force that has faltered man since the beginning of time. Adam and Eve in the Garden, Joseph with the situation with Potiphar's wife, and there are other stories from the bible that tackle the situation of temptation. "But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, gentleness". 1 Timothy 6:11. Apostle Paul instructed his protegee Timothy to flee these types of lust's. Drugs, alcohol and porn are just a few of these devices that will slowly not just destroy your mind but your soul. Temptation is very powerful that is why in The book of James we are instructed to "submit to God and resist the devil". We must pick up our cross daily and deny our flesh.

- RODNEY WISE