

Year of Faith
Liturgical Minute No. 32
The Poor Closest to Us

Mother Teresa is best known for her service to the poor and unloved on the streets of Calcutta. Many supported her work from afar. And while grateful for their support, she also told the world that “it is easy to love people far away. It is not always easy to love people that live beside us.” Yes, “it is easier to give a cup of rice to relieve hunger than to relieve the loneliness and pain of someone unloved in our own home.”

A primary motivation for Mother Teresa’s work was a focus on the words of Jesus who told us, “*Amen, I say to you, whatever you do for the poor among you, you do unto me.*” We would all gain a healthy understanding of these words of Jesus by keeping in the forefront of our minds the full text of Matthew 25:31-46.

Mother Teresa challenged us to ask ourselves: “Do I know the poor? Do I know, in the first place, the poor in my family, and those who are closest to me” – the people who are poor, not for the lack of bread, but poor in spirit, and poor for the lack of love.”

Deacon Gary Nelson

Major Source: Anthony Stern, M.D., *Everything Begins with Prayer – Mother Teresa’s Meditations on Spiritual Life for People of All Faiths*, Second Edition, pp. 6, 12-13, 2009.