

Recognizing Everyone's Gifts

by Jim Garner

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (NIV)

The curbing/street gutter outside our building is a mess, full of leaves and trash. The other day as we were walking by this mess, Scott said, "I miss that woman."

When we first moved here almost a decade ago, there was a very tiny old immigrant woman who spent nearly every day sweeping the gutters of our street. Even though she used what appeared to be the stub remains of a hand-made broom, there was rarely a leaf or piece of trash to be found. I never understood why she had this compulsion, but you could tell the work, the purpose, brought her joy.



She is gone now -- either passed away or in a nursing facility -- and we miss her. She was the kind of person all too easily dismissed by the world as old, insignificant, and perhaps suffering from a mental illness; but she was clearly a gift, sharing her blessings with our neighborhood.

In the hubbub of life, we often overlook the small yet meaningful blessings others provide to make our community better.

Prayer: Thank you God for all the little blessings of your children. Help us to recognize and be grateful for the different kinds of gifts offered by those who are unjustly marginalized in our world. Amen.