

Martin De Porres House of Hospitality

*225 Potrero Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94103
415-552-0240*

I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble.

Helen Keller

Thanksgiving 2002

Dear Friends,

At Martins we have been blessed with many small tasks. Each onion chopped, each dish scraped and washed, each breakfast and lunch meal served, each shower given, each encounter is an opportunity to learn compassion. We are blessed with this spiritual practice knowing the task will never be accomplished in a single day, week, month or year. Instead, it is something we commit ourselves to for a lifetime.

As people of Faith, we believe we are all children of God; precious, unique and loved by that which created and is creating All. Our daily practice is to continue to see the intrinsic value of each person not their material or financial worth. Each small task brings us closer to each other. We must practice compassion, even when we think we don't have any left. The compassion we extend to others is the same compassion we are shown each day of our lives in the very air we breath, the sun which allows us all to grow, the earth which feeds us and the water which gives us life.

We must continue the "small task" of sowing seeds of compassion even if we never see the flowers bloom. We must not get discouraged even in the shadow of our greatest fears. We must not despair when all around us looks hopeless and futile. It may seem as if we are not accomplishing anything but inside us God's love is All-ways growing.

Learning and practicing compassion is in itself a great and noble task, which teaches us great truths. There are those beings on earth who learn the great truths in an instant. For most of us the journey takes longer. Our teacher, though, is the most patient of all teachers and we don't have far to go to school. Our teacher dwells in our hearts, our classroom, every day of our lives.

St. Terese of Lisieux said, "Every small task of everyday life is part of the total harmony of the universe." Each one of us, each day, each moment, is given an opportunity to contribute to this harmony. Each of our lives, but a sum of small tasks, is part of the infinite, beautiful tapestry of Co-Creation.

At Martins nothing we do is noble or great. Although suffering continues and the world seems in a worse place we remain committed to the small tasks of compassion, which enable us to discover and sustain our Faith. For 31 years we have been practicing.

Our deepest gratitude for all of your generous support.

In God's Light and Love,



Barbara Collier