

Dear Folks,

Thank you for your contributions to the Midnight Run. Just one short story this time.

We made a special request for toiletry supplies for this Run. Many people (and notably the families of The Foundry Montessori School) came through with socks, underwear, t-shirts, toothpaste and toothbrushes, soap and deodorant, shampoo and sanitizer. When I went to the school to pick up the supplies the children rushed to bring a heavy basket of supplies to the rug where we would sit. It took four children to carry the basket. We also used monetary contributions to purchase bulk supplies.

On Saturday night when we were stopped at 53rd and 5th Ave I took a walk up the avenue to look for some “sleepers”. Iorgo and I had spotted two people sleeping in the recessed doorways of a church at 55th St. as we drove to our stop. We look for “sleepers” as we drive to our appointed stops, and if possible, walk back to them. If they’re asleep we’ll leave a sandwich and water, if awake, we’ll ask what they need and try to deliver it.

The doorways to the church are raised above street level with steep steps and the doorways are deeply recessed, providing shelter from the rain and some refuge from the bustle of the street. There were two senior men separate staircases; one man was eating a sandwich, and an elegant bag with nicely packaged Chinese food was on the step below him. It looked like a passer-by had dropped off leftovers from dinner. The other man was tucked in under a sheet of cardboard and a blanket. He had yellow socks on his hands. A woman of a certain age was sleeping in half a box on the street level next to the church looking at something on her phone.

All three responded when I called out “Midnight Run” and requested supplies. The woman asked for a blanket. “You gave me one a while ago, a very pretty one, but it was stolen.” I came back with the supplies, but no blanket, they had already been given away. The man with the yellow socks had climbed out of his “bed” and was sitting on the steps, a tall, lanky man with heavy white stubble. He took the bag of toiletries and thanked me. “Thursday is my birthday; I’m 79 years old. This will be my birthday present.” I wished him a happy birthday. I read recently in The Times that there are more seniors on the streets now. These are three of them.