

John Lawrie-Saint Agnes-Covington Catholic

A Difference Maker in the Making

When the modern culture thinks of making a difference, it normally thinks of just donating money to organizations that help the poor. "That'll make a difference, just give 'em some money and send them on their way." As we Catholics say, the modern culture isn't always right. Not that donating money is a bad thing, there is just so much more we can do. I as a Catholic think of making a difference in a whole different way. Here's how I have been making difference.

When I look into a homeless man or woman's eyes and engage a conversation with them, I see more than just a hungry beggar lying in the streets. I see a perfect human being whom I love, talking to me. That is how to make a difference. To treat those who are lowly in not just money, but social status, ego, and health, like they are a king or queen.

Throughout the years my family has been visiting the Rose Garden Mission in Covington, Kentucky. It's a medium size warehouse that will give food and essentials to anyone who walks through the door. We will go to either donate food, help out with household chores, or both. It's so great to hear when the little nun comes out and says you have helped three hundred people. I have so much *joy* when I see the look in some people's eyes when they are receiving their food and I know I have been a part of that.

It's not just the homeless we need to make a difference for. I feel the calling to make a difference to all people no matter what is going on in their life. I still love them and would do anything for them. God has blessed me with the amazing talent of playing the piano. I give that talent back to God by playing at nursing home's for the elderly and

at mass for the parishioners. My goal is to inspire others to step out of their comfort zone and to give God back some of the talent he gave us.

It helps to stop and think about how insanely blessed I am to live in America and have a great family that *cares* for me. There are so many people who have no one to care for them. As far-fetched as this sounds, even in my own neighborhood. When I walk to Covington Catholic for Colonel Youth Football practice I am normally confronted with someone walking the opposite way. I look into their eyes and say hello how are you. Some people so surprised that someone actually cared for them they smile the best smile someone can give and just keep smiling as we pass by. Deep down I know I've done something good and I strive to do more of it.

Around a month ago, when my sister had her birthday party in fountain square, I noticed a lot of homeless men and women standing around in the cold. I looked around and saw a whole tray of uneaten cupcakes and thought well hey, maybe I can give those guys some cupcakes. I walked around handing them out with my grandpa. It was then I realized that just handing out the cupcakes was doing minimal for those people. They appreciated the cupcake I was sure, but I then decided to walk back to one of the men huddling in a blanket and start a conversation. We talked for a bit and he noticed it was my sister's birthday. He said to wish her a happy birthday. I thought man, this guy, struggling for pennies, is wishing my sister a happy birthday. I asked him his name and he said John. I was like "No way me too!" We laughed and continued to talk and I realized how friendly he was. John was in horrible conditions on the street at night in twenty degree weather and still was a happy benevolent man. John eventually told me

that his birthday was the next week. Of course I wished him a happy birthday, (and as it was time for me to leave) said my goodbyes' and went on my way.

Still today I remember the sincerity in his eyes of a trusting person, and as I look back I wish I could do more to help John and everyone else who is demoralized, because that is really what making a difference is about. It's about making those who feel unloved, feel loved and those who feel helpless, independent. I still wish I could have done more for John and all the others. I acknowledge that I am not perfect at things and still a bit frightened at some homeless men and women's appearances, but I pray to God that he will help me to overcome my fears and help all those in need. I pray that God will not only help me to become a difference maker, but all of those around me who are blessed with so much to become the best difference maker they can be. I believe that I really am a difference maker in the making.