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St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta once said, “A life not lived for others is not a life.” Mother Teresa lived a life of service, dedicating herself to the poorest of the poor, just as God instructed her to do. She never second-guessed God’s will for her, and she was not one to turn down a person who desperately needed her help, seeing Jesus in everyone. Mother Teresa welcomed all people with open arms, not judging them based on trivial matters. She preached that no one should belittle others, especially when the people that are being discriminated against are the ones who need help most. She said, “I don’t look at anything. Every person, whether he is Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, he is my brother, my sister.” Our modern-day world can look at this quote and at the way Mother Teresa lived her life and realize that something needs to change. Each and every one of us can be that change, we just have to put others before we put ourselves.

I have attempted to follow Mother Teresa’s example by the way that I live my life, giving as much of my time and efforts as I can to serving the less fortunate of my community. I volunteer at Hands Against Hunger in the summertime when they have open slots that I can register for, and I volunteer at Matthew 25: Ministries at least once a month. At Hands Against Hunger, I help to provide struggling families of impoverished nations protein-filled food that gives them the basic nutrients to ensure that they are in a healthy condition. At Matthew 25: Ministries, I do a great variety of services. Usually, my family and I tape or sort body care products, and by doing this, we are helping to provide families that live in poverty with basic care to make them feel clean. In America, we take these body care products for granted, but getting clean means a lot to the people of the countries that the care products get shipped to. Because of my

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service, people all around the world are getting the basic necessities that they need to live, and since I gave up some of my time to help others, many lives were saved.

St. Teresa of Calcutta, along with a host of other saints, preached doing the “small things with great love”. I do the small things at my grade school, St. Ignatius Loyola, by participating in my eighth grade church choir, doing liturgical movement, being an altar server, and being a Eucharistic minister. The people in my parish that come to the school masses, especially the elderly part of the congregation, are deeply moved spiritually when they hear my eighth grade choir sing and when they see us perform the liturgical movement dances. They enjoy watching us, and they tell us after Mass how much joy it brought to their day. By doing these few seemingly small things, I affect people in big ways, and I bring them closer to God.

I try to positively affect as many people as I can, and the biggest way that I do that is through participating in the Marian Award, an eighteen month service project designed to help the participants learn more about Mary. Marian Award ends at the end of January, and through it, I have completed more than fifteen hours of service work. I have visited various non-profit organizations to volunteer my time, and I have affected a great many people through this process. I have brought joy to the residents at St. Paul’s Nursing Home during the Christmas season by delivering cards to them and talking to them, made rosaries for the younger kids at St. Ignatius, and volunteered at St. Leo’s. Because of my Marian Award group and me giving up my time to help these people who are less fortunate than us, joy was bought into their lives, and

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they were inspired with hope for a better future. Because I put others before myself, many lives were made less bleak, and their hearts were warmed because of our service. I affected many people's life for the better through Marian Award, and the less fortunate people in my community are eternally grateful that I provided a spark of light and warmth to their day.

The biggest service activity that I took part in while participating in the Marian Award was the Giving Tree, a project that my parish puts on every year during the holiday season for kids whose parents are unable to buy Christmas presents for them. Our group was responsible for organizing and carrying out this project. Through the Giving Tree, we provided these kids with newly purchased presents so that they would not be disappointed on Christmas when they woke up to find no presents under the tree. In the middle of December, we collected all of these presents from our parish, and we sorted them based on what charity they were going to. We also helped load and unload the gifts at the charities. We had over one thousand presents that our parish donated to help out our community, and people's lives were made brighter because of it.

On Wednesday, November 9, 2016, Liam Herzog passed away because of a successful suicide attempt. Liam was only thirteen years old and in seventh grade at this time, and he was one of my classmates and in my grade. The week leading up to the anniversary of his death in 2017 was very painful, and that day was one of the worst in my life. A group of eighth graders and I wanted to do something for our grade, so we wrote positive sayings on different colored Post-It notes to remind everyone that they

were not alone and to remind them to stay positive during that hard week. We stuck the Post-Its on the walls in the middle school portion of the building and in the middle school

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bathrooms for both the boys and girls. This project was meant to help the eighth grade student body get through the week of November 5, 2017, and to remind them that they had a whole grade behind them, supporting them. Through this project, I affected many people for the better because they were overwhelmed, and I helped them make it through to the bright side. They were in mourning, and I comforted them. They were struggling, and I helped to lift them up.

Doing service work and helping the less fortunate of my community is what we all are called to do to serve others, and throughout my life I have been brought up in the kind of environment where other people come before myself, the kind of environment when race, ethnicity, and other insignificant matters are considered trifles. St. Teresa of Calcutta chose to serve others without judging them or expecting anything in return, saying, “Judging a person does not define who they are...It defines who *you* are.” I have tried my best my entire life to walk in Mother Teresa’s footsteps and to be a loving and caring person who puts everyone before herself, and thanks to my upbringing and the loving community of family and friends around me, I have been able to just that.