

Heart ♥ to ♥ Heart



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Our March issue focuses on the good in our world and on the opportunities experienced by our readers to extend kindness and compassion and/or to notice others offering kindness and compassion. Thank you to those who have shared these accounts of kindness and compassion that have touched their lives and hearts. Since there are many to share, our readers might, as a Lenten practice, simply read one or two each day as an invitation to take notice of the acts of kindness and compassion that are a part of each one's day.



While a program for immigrants was being given to teach them their rights, members of NonViolent Owensboro (KY) provided peaceful greetings at the door to protect the immigrants inside from ICE or others who might have come to disrupt the teaching going on inside the building. Meanwhile, the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph provided a cocoon of prayer around all involved.

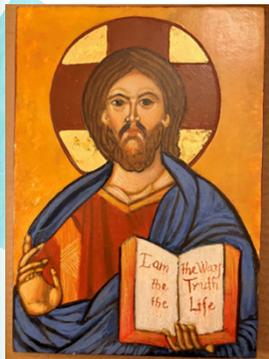
—Rebecca White, OSU, Maplemount, KY

I experienced very tangibly the kindness and compassion of two University of Idaho students. I do not know who they were, but when I slipped on ice and cracked my skull, I could not get up. It was they who came out of nowhere and assisted me to my feet and into a building where I was able to gain my bearings. They disappeared before I could thank them, but without quick action on their part, I could have easily been very greatly hurt.

—Dennis Conley, Moscow, ID

I was the recipient of another's great generosity and kindness. For three years I have yearned to attend another icon retreat. However, many things did not allow me to do this. This year a friend out of the blue paid for me to attend a five day "Write an icon retreat." What she did for me totally touched me in so many ways. I wanted to bless her. I asked the Lord how I could do this, and He said, "Write the icon for her." So, I asked her what her prayer intention was, and I wrote this icon for her.

—Arlene Stoddard, Moscow, ID



I realize that it is so easy to find fault; however, the need is there to focus on what really matters: the blessings we have, and we have them in abundance!

—Elizabeth Mathew, Westwood, MA

After my husband's death in late October, I received over fifty cards and notes from people who live here in the retirement community. This both surprised me and touched me deeply. It was a beautiful tribute to my husband and, I guess, a recognition of what I was going through from people I barely knew as well as many friends.

—Polly Ohman, Shelburne, Vermont

At the Assisted Living Residence where I live, I experience daily the kindness of the medical technicians who dispense medicine to the residents. At times some residents, based on how they feel and their medical needs, exhibit impatience or even anger with the care givers. I sometimes overhear this exchange when the resident is sitting in her/his doorway, and I am walking down the hall. Each time the med tech has responded with patience, kindness, sympathy, understanding and/or "I am sorry." The other day I mentioned this to a med tech who replied that she knew that usually the resident was having a hard time, had a lot of pain or another challenge of some kind. I am touched by the compassionate care and concern the med techs have for each resident.

—Madonna O'Hara, OSU, St. Louis, MO

"SOONER OR LATER, WE ALL DISCOVER
THAT KINDNESS IS THE ONLY STRENGTH
THERE IS."

(GREGORY BOYLE, SJ)

Knowing I'm someone who likes cats, my friend Julie gave me a little pair of cat earrings. They're very small and probably hard to even see on my ears. When I opened them and said how cute they are she told me to read the bottom of the card they came on. It said, "A bad day does not mean a bad life. Tomorrow will be better." I love them dearly and wear them often.

—Rena Loveland, Hillsboro, MO

Where I am living (New York), several persons in our complex have started a "store" for those who are home-bound. They have items in this store that the home-bound folks can buy without having to find ways to go to the grocery stores which would be a hardship. Those who have been running the store chose to take the "excess/profits earned" to assist others by giving \$300 to Hope Kitchen and \$300 to the Shelter Program. Such kindness and compassion have touched me deeply to see how others are reaching out to those in need. For me, this gives me great hope in the goodness and kindness of others today.

—Ann Peterson, OSU, Mount Vernon, NY

Given the situation of our country, I must say I'd like to "wring the neck of our Congress leaders for their lack of leadership!" However, as I have listened to how others have reached out to their Senators and Representatives respectfully, encouraging them to uphold the Constitution, etc., I have been touched. I must admit that I haven't always reached out to them. However, these weeks I have repeatedly called and written them as fellow human beings, respectfully encouraging them to do what is right.

—Margaret Johnson, OSU, Moscow, ID

Recently, our school community came together in an incredible act of compassion to support a student battling Crohn's disease, with a single mother struggling to cover medical expenses. Our Ursuline Sisters' community, teachers, students, and families organized a fundraising effort. Donations of all sizes poured in, each given with a generous heart. The overwhelming support not only eased their financial burden but also showed them they are not alone in this fight. It was a powerful reminder of the kindness and strength within our school community.

—Veronica Sri Andayani, OSU,
Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia

A family member has had the experience of being fired from working with tribes in Alaska (Federal Government job). His own boss was not made aware of the job loss. As I listened to his experience, I found myself feeling very angry. However, that day I read a quote of Angela: "Be joyful and always full of love, faith, and hope in God!" Those words touched me and helped me realize that I could make the choice for joy and not remain in the state of anger. As the day unfolded, I had many opportunities to bring joy to others and became aware of just how many people were choosing the same thing: looking out for and really caring for one another.

—Jen Beller, Princeton, ID

I have been abiding with parents, friends and family members who had federal jobs and have been terminated because they were in probationary roles. Many are our best and brightest in rural communities of the intermountain west, servant leaders, that stepped up to serve their communities outside their jobs as city council members, volunteer first responders or fire fighters, coaches, umpires, scout or 4-H leaders. Unlike cities where there are other employment opportunities, this circumstance requires them to leave. The void in the community fabric is profound...In this JUBILEE Year we have the individual opportunity, each day, to be purveyors of HOPE in these circumstances.

—Kevin Laughlin, Garden City, ID

“MOTHER TERESA DIAGNOSED THE WORLD’S ILLS IN THIS WAY: WE’VE JUST FORGOTTEN THAT WE BELONG TO EACH OTHER. KINSHIP IS WHAT HAPPENS TO US WHEN WE REFUSE TO LET THAT HAPPEN.”

(GREGORY BOYLE, SJ)

The Knights of Columbus, well known for their generosity and their charitable actions, discovered that thousands of children in our country sleep every night “without a bed.” They just lie on their clothes or on the floor. The Knights of Columbus “SLEEP MISSION” group is now distributing to those families well-prepared beds which will transform the daily life of their children. The Mission is associated with the American “SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE” Organization which has already offered more 250,000 beds throughout the world.

—Noëlla Gaudreault, OSU, Québec, Canada

I do pastoral care in a local hospital which means very much to me as a ministry of presence. Recently, in visiting a man who was quite sick I was able to discern that he wanted to talk. My question, “How are you?” led him to open up about his life and medical condition. A further question, “How’s it going with you?” allowed him to share even more which led to this patient experiencing a deeper peace and the compassion of a fellow traveler. We ended giving each other a blessing! We are called to be there for one another!

—Russ Weil, St. Louis, MO

I was on my way to a cello lesson during the days that residual snow still covered streets and walks. As I struggled to get my large instrument out of the car and manage my cane at the same time, a very slight and lovely Asian woman, a perfect stranger, appeared out of nowhere and offered to help me get it into the building for my lesson.

—Chabanel Mathison, OSU, St. Louis, MO

Kindness + Compassion:

Listening deeply

Pause – a silence

“Are you warm at night, Ms. Alma?”

“Well... I have two blankets.

I gave one to the baby.

I’m fine, Sister.”

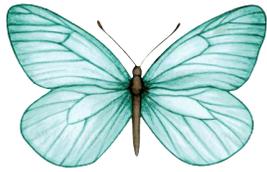
Within three hours I had five donated blankets.

“Oh my! Blankets,”

as a tear rolled down her cheek.

—Regina Marie Fronmüller, OSU,
New Orleans, LA





I was grateful that I was able to witness six of our juniors as they offered kindness and compassion to many people in Chicago for an immersion trip to the Brother David Darst Center this February. These juniors listened to the stories of men and women who were experiencing being unhoused and they made very healthy soup for over one hundred people and they cleaned up afterward. They held a prayer service in a neighborhood that was affected by gun violence and prayed for all the men and women by name who died during the past month from guns. They also spent time with mentally challenged adults and showed kindness by being present with them. It touched my heart to observe our juniors eagerly and willingly live out *Serviam* in so many ways.

—Joni Mullen, *St. Louis, MO*

Eleven years ago, I met Kathryn and Michael. Kathryn became a childminder to my children and welcomed them so lovingly into her home. Over the years her family has become our extended family. Last autumn we had a new satellite internet system fitted on our roof -- we live in a rural location -- and just before Christmas a storm blew the system, and it was hanging precariously. Without a word, on Christmas Eve, Michael sourced a really high ladder and sorted the system. I couldn't believe his kindness, and on one of his busiest days. He ensured that we had a Happy Christmas as without the internet we have no TV!

—Mary Egan, *Thurles, Tipperary, Ireland*

**“YOU WILL ACHIEVE MORE WITH
KINDNESS AND GENTLENESS THAN WITH
HARSHNESS AND SHARP REBUKES...”**

(ANGELA MERICI, 2ND COUNSEL)

In recent weeks I have been very touched by the article I read about the man who killed Sister Joanne Marie Mascha, a Cleveland Ursuline, and who has now asked for forgiveness after 30 years. This man's attitude has increased my hope that anything is possible, even with someone with the worst possible behavior. The path of the congregation since Sr Joanne was killed has been a thorny one, full of pitfalls, as St Angela would have said, but it is proving to be a path of growth and healing for each sister. I am also very touched by the wider impact that the sisters' attitude has had on the political and societal sphere, concerning the death penalty. For each one, a long process of transformation and healing that continues to affect me and make me reflect on many everyday events.

—Elisabeth Binet, *OSU, Rome, Italy*

At my school for children with special needs, one of our 7-year-old girls brought in small black and white cookies to share with her class. She then asked the teacher if she and a boy could go around offering the rest of the cookies to the other teachers in the building. While the two walked around, they became aware that they did not have enough to share with all. So, they broke the cookies up into such small pieces that most adults received a small piece – pretty much a crumb – but as she and the boy commented, “We are sharing what we have!!”

—Jeannie Humphries, *OSU, Eastchester, NY*

