



By Pat Haggerty

As many of you know, I work part-time doing workshops for teachers and administrators in various school districts. I can't tell you how many Power Points I have created! While putting one together recently, I chose as my last slide the saying: "teachers make a difference every single day!"

How do they do that? Is it by creating a good lesson? Is it by complimenting a child? Is it by assisting a colleague with a difficult task? It could be one of the above or all of the above!

How about us in our daily lives? How do we go about making a difference? What do we use as our GPS to guide us to the right thing to do? It's not that intricate, nor do we need any device other than our internal longing and an open heart.

If we remember the words of the Little Flower, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, we will have a mantra we can follow: "Miss no single opportunity of making some small sacrifice, here by a smiling look, there by a kindly word; always doing the smallest right and doing it all for love."

Our efforts need not be grandiose. In fact, sometimes even the smallest gesture is the one most remembered or cherished. It could be bringing that banana bread to your elderly neighbor; picking up the mail for your uncle who is on crutches; bringing the church bulletin to a friend who missed mass because of illness. It could be a gesture for a family member.

Sometimes we overlook members of our family as recipients of our kindness. They, above anyone else, need our support! I often thought I had to do for others before realizing that my family members were the ones who really needed me!

The kindness we bestow on others need not be restricted to actions. Prayer is a powerful way for us to help others. When we can't offer a helping hand, we can at least offer a prayer. That can be even more powerful. Remembering people in our prayers is a positive act of making a difference. We beseech the Lord to come into those people's lives or help them with their sorrows. For instance, we may not be able to send a donation to the Filipinos devastated by the typhoon, but we can certainly pray for them! They need our prayers for strength and hope. They are our brothers and sisters, and they need us to do what we can.

Whatever we do, we must do so with love. Love should be at our center. Remember the words of John: "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love."

We will make a difference through our acts of love!