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Class of 2018

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Topic

Fr. Jacques-François Dujarié said, "I am a priest in order to be a comfort to the widow, the father of the orphan, the protector of the poor, the friend of the sick." How do you provide comfort to those less fortunate? Are you charitable with the sick and the poor in word and deed? How can you go beyond your school's service requirement to make a bigger difference in the lives of others?

For ten years, I was always fighting for my life and wondering why God had chosen me. I put all my heart and soul into loving the lord and each year, I would have a new set back in my life that tempted my belief. I always had to ask myself, "why me?" Have you not tested me to the limit? How many more surgeries could a girl have? It was hard for me to put into perspective that there was anything good in life for me. Once I begin to overcome some of my obstacles, I knew that I wanted to be able to help others. All of the doctors and nurses were always so kind and understanding to me and treated me like I was a life-long friend. They were always positive and upbeat and gave be the perseverance to continue with my fight. I had to search through my heart and figure out how I could give back to the world the way my life was given back to me. Like Father Dujarié, I had to protect the poor and be a friend to the sick.

I had a desire to be of service to my community and a compassion for helping those in need. I started out small by being an altar server at my church and working with my girl scout troop collecting toiletries for the homeless and making care bags to hand out. As I began to grow and become more comfortable in my skin, I started going to nursing homes and reading books to the elderly and playing bingo with them. A lot of the people I came in contact with had no families and just lived there waiting until they were in God's hands. It made me feel like I really did not have it so bad in life. God chose me to fight those battles because he knew that I had the strength to do it. He knew that I would never give up and would continue to fight to the end.

As I began to watch my sister do volunteer work at a shelter with the homeless, I decided that this was something that I could do also. Since I was in the second grade, I have been going to Our Lady Queen of Peace Soup Kitchen to feed the homeless. It started out with just going a few times a year. It has grown to going the last Sunday of each month for the past 10 years. Each year the number of hours that I spend with the helping the poor has increased. I have made sandwiches, collected toiletries, make survival bags, brought food for their animals, made food, served them food and just talked to them with a listening ear. Each school year, my school awards me an Exemplary Community Service Certificate for exceeding 45 hours.

In order to make a bigger difference in the world, I need to continue to find other ways that I can be of help to those less fortunate. It's not just about providing them with food to eat, but finding out what else they are lacking in their lives. I have decided to start doing a clothing drive and take bags of clothing to the center when I go. I want them to know that they can be fed and clothed at the same time. I decided to pick a few people each time just to speak to and find out how their day is going. I will find out if there is anything particular that they really need. I talked to one guy named Jerome and found out he has a cat, so now I bring him cat food each time.

I always go back and remember how I was tempted in my life to lose faith in God. It was through many kind people that I realized that God had a plan for me and it was good. I just don't ever want to have regrets because everything I have done in life is exactly what I have wanted to do.