

Prompt 3 How can I, as a young Catholic woman, contribute to the SPDCCW Mission?

By Alexis Milano

I have witnessed God's unconditional love by serving my community. The act of giving to others has taught me how powerful the pure love of Jesus Christ is. As a young Catholic woman, I put my trust in Jesus Christ to guide me to live my life by spreading his love.

The Bible verse that has most impacted my life is John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." Jesus' death on the cross was the ultimate selfless act of love and grace. It is my intimate relationship with Jesus that leads me to make a continuous effort to help make life better for others through selfless acts. As I enter this new chapter of my life, my hope is that people who meet me can recognize me as a follower of Jesus. I want people to see my kindness as a reflection of the unconditional love that Jesus shows others.

Over the past couple of years, I have served during the summer as a volunteer at the Good Samaritan Project. By performing simple acts of kindness, I was able to be an example of Jesus for others. One of the service sites was the Sunshine Christian Homes, where my church youth group was working on landscaping for this property. After many hours of weeding, gardening, and mulching in the heat, my body was overcome with exhaustion, but I felt something in my heart tell me to not give up. Some of the residents' sheds needed to be repainted, so I picked up the paint brush and began painting. An elderly woman walked from her house over to the shed and hugged me. She thanked me for painting her shed and told me that I am an angel for my hard work. In this moment, the woman saw me as God's blessing sent to her. This interaction assured me that I was meant to be there serving God and spreading his goodness.

In the beginning of this school year, God was stirring in my heart that I needed to help my community. As a youth leader in my church, I saw an opportunity to use my leadership to serve. I helped run a shoe and sock drive for students in need within Pasco County Schools. I attended all Masses over the weekend to collect the donations for these children. The overwhelming response from the members of my church of shoe and sock donations was truly inspiring to me. I saw how God uses others to serve his people. Through the generosity of the members of my church, we came together to serve the needy in our world. I was not just an example to our church of how the

youth can actively serve the Lord, but I was an example to the youth of how God can work through us to impact our community. These are just a few of the amazing encounters that I have had serving others, which has deepened my relationship with Jesus.

I enjoy sharing my Catholic faith with others and often invite others to participate in service events or to join me at Mass. God has put people in my life that have had an interest to learn more about the Catholic faith as well as those who do not know about the Catholic faith. I invited a non-Catholic friend to attend a youth service with me. Witnessing my friend experience Adoration for the first time was a moment that I will never forget. My friend felt the presence of Jesus during the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. I pray that all people can know Jesus and experience him through the Eucharist. Through prayer, invitation, and acts of service, I can carry out the mission of Catholic women in our society.