



# KINDNESS

## WEEKLY LETTER FROM MONSIGNOR KEN

Today I propose a challenge to us as a parish and as individuals.

This week, while not observed since it falls on Sunday (September 27), the Church honors St Vincent de Paul, the Apostle of Charity. He had two profound experiences that helped shape his life's mission. In 1605, he was captured by pirates and sold into slavery. Before escaping, his encounter with suffering sensitized him to the plight of the poor and destitute. Similarly, when he was called to hear the deathbed confession of a peasant, he realized the spiritual poverty of the poor. Driven by these experiences, he spent his life in service of the poor and needy, inspiring the formation of the Vincentians (the religious community of our own Bishop O'Connell) and what we now know as the St. Vincent de Paul Society, very active right here in St. Mary's.

Recently, in a homily, I spoke of a ten-year old boy, Maxx Raser, who last year in honor of his birthday, decided to perform ten acts of kindness. His idea was inspired by Bryan Tsiliaco, who had committed to thirty acts of kindness for his thirtieth birthday. That got me thinking. Next year, 2027, St. Mary's will observe several milestones: St. Mary's Church will be 40 years old (dedicated in 1987); St Mary Academy, originally All Saints founded in 1997, will celebrate 30 years of Catholic education in our parish; St. Mary of the Pines (dedicated in 2007) will be 20 years old. Add all of them together and you get  $40 + 30 + 20 = 90$ . That leads to my challenge. Wouldn't it be wonderful, if we as a parish in order to honor all of these anniversaries would commit to 90, yes 90 acts of kindness!

How is that possible? It's not that difficult, but it requires teamwork, Just imagine if each of our many ministries committed to one act of kindness! There is one rule. It must not be something they already do. For example, St. Vincent de Paul can't commit to distributing food. They already do so. Each ministry could even create smaller teams within themselves. In addition, families could make a commitment, or even individuals as did Maxx and Bryan.

Thinking of St. Vincent de Paul's lifetime of charity, I am calling this our Apostolic Challenge. The goal is to make a difference in our parish and community through multiple apostolic works. The possibilities are endless and are limited only by our God-given imaginations. These actions could include visiting a nursing home; visiting a neighbor who lives alone; writing to the homebound; bringing food to the homeless; a coat or blanket drive; distributing rosaries; organizing a clean-up; helping with minor repairs for a senior citizen; raising money for a particular cause. This list is literally endless. Imagine the impact! So, I invite, and challenge you, to begin thinking. Are you up to it? Will you accept the challenge? More to come!

**"At the sight of the crowds, His heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd." (Matthew 9:36)**