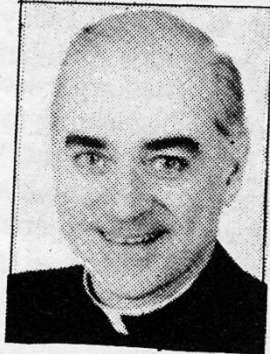


Father John Catoir

Making a Difference

Last June 6, I was asked to preach the homily at St. Cecilia's grammar school graduation in Rockaway. The pastor Msgr. Charles Powers, is a good friend, and he also asked me to judge the winning entry of a class essay contest based on the Christopher motto, *It is Better to Light One Candle Than to Curse the Darkness*. I chose Taryn Macones' entry above all the others. Here are some excerpts from her winning essay.



"To light a candle means to make every effort count. Many people make every effort count in their lives. Such people are Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Teresa and me.

"Martin Luther King Jr. led the revolution for desegregation. Mother Teresa cares for the poor and the sick. I can help brighten up someone's day with a compliment, a good deed or a smile. These people and many others are making a difference in the world each day.

Martin Luther King Jr. made every effort count by leading the civil rights movement. He participated in nonviolent tactics such as bus boycotts, lectures, the March on Washington, other protest marches, and sit-ins. What made him such a great leader was that he fought for civil rights in a nonviolent manner.

"Mother Teresa proved she makes every effort count in many ways. She works in one of the poorest places in the world, Calcutta, India. There she serves the untouchables, providing them with the good aid, care and love they need. Not only did Mother Teresa open a home

for the poor, but she also founded an orphanage. This remarkable woman helps in such poor and unhealthy areas that it is possible she could catch a disease and die. Yet she continues to work in such badly kept parts of the country trusting fully in God. Her entire life has been devoted to God and to helping His people.

"I also can try to make every effort count the way Martin Luther King Jr. and Mother Teresa have. It is not necessary for me to lead a civil rights movement or work with the poor in Calcutta, but in my own way I can always try to be the best person I possibly can be. I can do good deeds, lend a hand, or even smile at someone who is having a bad day. If I notice someone with their arms filled with packages or pushing a stroller, I can open the door for them. I can also give to the missions instead of buying something for myself. When someone is going through some hard times, I can help them by saying something friendly and comforting them. I can pray for them so that God can help them as well.

"Although the candle I can light is not as big as the ones lit by Martin Luther King Jr. and Mother Teresa, I can light many small ones with these acts of kindness.

"It does not matter how big the impact of your effort is, but that you seized the opportunity to make a difference. Take a tip from billboards on the highway: *Commit a random act of kindness.*"

It's a pleasure to see an inspirational idea captured so succinctly. I hope you enjoyed Taryn's essay as much as I did.

[For a free copy of the Christopher News Note, Put It In Writing, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to The Christophers, 12 E. 48th St., New York.]

