

SEEKING CHRIST'S HEART

Hope or despair: It is in the little things

I was blessed to be with a group of archdiocesan pilgrims in St. Peter's Square for the canonization of seven saints, including Sts. Kateri Tekakwitha and Marianne Cope.

A couple of tourists asked me about our new North American saints. "What great things did they do?" I was really taken aback by my lack of a great quick answer. They were faithful, and they did "small things with great love," as Blessed



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Mother Teresa instructed. They said "yes" at key moments and lived by the verse "whatever you did for the least of my brothers, you did for me" (Mt 25:40). They were faithful and kind in tough circumstances.

Sam Charpentier, a senior

at both St. James Academy and Olathe Northwest, starred in a short film, titled "Just Like You — Down Syndrome" by the Down Syndrome Guild of Greater Kansas City. The film is powerful and, like the canonizations, calls us to give each person we meet the respect that they deserve. Sam asks us to be patient and to listen; he wants what all of our loved ones want.

We thirst for truth, goodness, beauty and community. As we prepare to enter Advent and the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons, remember that each of us possesses "a pearl of great price." We possess Christ's love and "the peace that surpasses all understanding."

Your loved ones thirst for

presence and love. Christ's love and peace is a free gift that he shares with us and that he wants us to freely share with each other. Texting, phone calls, social media, holiday shopping and chores can distract us from being present to those who need us most: children, elderly parents and spouses.

Michelangelo shows us both hope and despair in the Last Judgment mural in the Sistine Chapel. Young people can quickly move from hope to despair during the pressures of finals and holiday social pressures. As we seek the heart of Christ, remember that our simplest words and actions have a profound impact on children, employees, families and all those that look to

each of us for Christ's love and peace. The saints were faithful and kind in tough circumstances; we are called through our baptism and strengthened by prayer to do the same.

Read books with your kids. Play games. Wrestle on the floor. Create warm memories. Notice the work and effort of your employees and co-workers. Listen deeply to your spouse. You can create a "hope" or a "despair" culture around you. Christ is hope personified.

St. Kateri found consolation during her turbulent life in times of quiet prayer with Jesus. If you are far from peaceful, stop, exhale, and ask Jesus to lead you deeper into his merciful heart.