

IF YOU SHOW UP— BE OBEDIENT— GOD WILL SHOW OFF

I PROMISE YOU

A Catholic's Complete Guide to Serving the Poor, Building Community,
and Encountering the Living God

By Aaron Myler

*“If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one.”
— St. Teresa of Calcutta*

In the end, God won't care if you had a PhD or a GED. He will ask if you followed the Master's decree. He is not going to give you a theology test; He is going to give you a biography test. Here is the test:

35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me,

36 naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.

37 Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?’

38 When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?’

39 When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’

40 And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’

Matthew 25:35–40

A NOTE BEFORE WE BEGIN

When COVID shut down the youth ministry where I had been serving as Youth Minister, I found myself unexpectedly let go. The work I had built my life around—forming young disciples, pouring into teenagers, showing up every week—was suddenly gone. I did not know what was next. I was not sure what God was doing. But I knew I could not stop serving. So I relaunched Impact, and I headed back out to the streets of Melbourne, Florida, with a stack of pizzas and a willing heart.

That is when I met Brian Ling.

Brian was sitting near the sidewalk, barely able to stand. His health had been catastrophically failing—heart, kidneys, lungs, everything at once. He could not walk more than a few steps at a time. But when he looked up at me, there was something unmistakable in his eyes—not defeat, but presence. The kind that only comes from a man who has lived a thousand stories and knows that every person in front of him is worth his full attention.

And what a life he had lived. Brian was a world-traveled saxophonist who had spent thirty to forty years moving through the highest circles of music. He was eight years old on a movie set with Louis Armstrong. His first major record was cut at Abbey Road—Elton John and Kiki Dee's “Don't Go Breaking My Heart.” He performed with Tom Jones and Julie Andrews. He was the house band at Christine Lee's Steakhouse for decades, and on a first-name basis with Hank Aaron.

And now he was sitting on a sidewalk in Melbourne, Florida, telling me quietly that he had run out of food to take with his twenty-two daily medications—and that he had been thinking about calling it quits.

“I had just been let go. He was just about to give up. God's timing is rarely what we expect—and never accidental.”

I believe with everything in me that God placed us in each other's path that day. Not just so I could help Brian—but so Brian could help me. Over the next five years, he became one of my closest friends. He served me with his courage, his relentless focus on people, his refusal to let hardship shrink his heart. When we eventually got him a car, he took over my entire pizza route—driving around Melbourne, feeding the people on the street, learning their names, sitting with them. A man who could barely walk became the one delivering hope.

There is one more chapter of Brian's story I need to share. A week before Brian passed away in the hospital, a missionary friend of mine named Mark came to sit with him. Together, they prayed—at length, with depth and intention—offering up every ounce of Brian's suffering, his failing heart, his lungs, his body worn down by decades of hard living, all of it lifted before God as a gift, while Brian clutched the Saint Benedict crucifix that Mark had given him. And in that hospital room, Brian reaffirmed Jesus as his Savior. Not in a moment of panic, but in peace. With a friend beside him. With prayer as the language and suffering as the offering.

That is what this whole book points toward. Service is not simply a good deed or a social program. It is the missing piece—the living hinge—that allows grace to flow freely between prayer, the Church, and a life of active love for God and others. When those three move together, they do not just change the person being served. They prepare the soul. Brian's story did not end on the sidewalk. It ended in prayer, in surrender, in the arms of Jesus. That is the destination this kind of service is always moving toward.

“This is not a book about heroics. It is a book about what happens when you slow down long enough to see another human being—and let their humanity change yours.”

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PART ONE

The Question That Changes Everything

Chapter 1: Does God Love You? (And Does It Show?)

The question of God's love is not answered in theory. It's answered in action. When you serve another person—really serve them, not as a project but as a brother or sister—you encounter Jesus. At first, you may not see it deeply. You might feel awkward. Unsure. Maybe even underwhelmed. You hand someone a sandwich and drive away wondering if it mattered at all. But something else happens too, quietly, beneath the surface: a small ember catches. You learn a nugget of what true happiness feels like. And slowly, imperceptibly, it takes on a higher purpose.

If you've ever felt uncertain of God's love—for you, for the world, for the mess we're all living in—then step out. The act of serving actually frees you from what separates you from God. It doesn't ask you to have it all figured out. It doesn't require you to be holy first. It just asks you to show up. To be present. To offer what you have, however small.

And in that offering, something sacred unfolds.

Over time, when you go deeper into service, something shifts in the back of your heart. It's hard to describe, but you'll know it when it happens. A quiet, unmistakable sense that God the Father is smiling. That the person sitting across from you—the one with the weathered face and the grocery cart piled with everything they own—is your brother. Your sister. His child too. That's not sentiment. That's theology. Can we make this part of our biography? That's the truth the Church has proclaimed for two thousand years: every person is made in the image and likeness of God. And when you serve them, you serve Him.

Here's something remarkable: the Harvard Study on Adult Development—the longest study of human happiness ever conducted, spanning 75 years—found that the number one factor for a long, happy, healthy life is good relationships. Not money. Not fame. Not career achievement. Relationships. Deep, authentic, loving relationships. And here's what no one tells you: you find good people by doing good things. You find your people in the places where love is being lived out, where compassion is made real, where the Gospel is not just believed but practiced.

Let me tell you something else. When you can make a real difference—when you've sat with someone who has no one, when you've brought communion to a 92-year-old woman who cried because she hadn't received the Eucharist in months, when you've watched a kid in your Faith Formation class finally 'get it' and smile—you won't be satisfied scrolling reels anymore. You won't be content binging another show. You will want to keep going.

“You find good people by doing good things.”

PART TWO

How to Begin — The Only Three Things You Need

Chapter 2: Commit Small. Start. Find Your People.

The formula is not complicated. It never was. Commit small. Start. Find your people. These are the only three things you need—and they work whether you are brand new to service or building something much bigger. The beginning is the path. The path is the beginning. There is no secret sauce. There is no magic moment when you'll finally feel ready. There is only the decision to begin.

Finding an obvious need makes sense as a place to start. This gives you the opportunity to offer help without imposing. Not every need is visible. Not every gift matches every ministry. But you know what you already notice. You know who you see on your commute, what breaks your heart when you scroll the news, what keeps you awake at 2 a.m. That noticing—that's where God is speaking. That's your invitation.

One of the most important things my parents did for me and my siblings was bring us along to be present—at retirement homes, at soup kitchens, with adults who were mentally handicapped. We didn't have a program. We didn't have a five-step plan. We simply fit in where we were needed. We showed up, we served food, and God showed off. We played cards. We listened to the same story told three times by the same man who couldn't remember he'd already told us—and God showed off again. Volunteering alongside people who modeled service well is one of the most powerful ways to grow. My parents were that for us. And now I want to be that for you here today and going forward.

For the toe-dippers and for the leaders, the formula is exactly the same. Begin small. Serve faithfully. Stay connected through our Service on the Schedule

webinars and through @serviceontheschedule on social media—a growing family learning, praying, and enjoying fellowship together in person and from afar, building a movement of obedient followers of Jesus. The beginning is the path. You don't need to go from elementary math to algebra to calculus to rocket science. You need something simple, repeated, and reproducible. Something you can do once, then do again, then invite someone else into. That's how movements start. That's how the Kingdom grows—one pizza, one name, one faithful Tuesday afternoon at a time.

PART THREE

The Three Doors — Your Specific Ministry Guide

Chapter 3: The Street — Serving the Poor in Your Daily Life

You don't have to go anywhere special. The poor are already in your commute. They are at the intersection you pass every morning on the way to work. They are the woman with the cardboard sign near the coffee shop. They are the man who talks to himself by the bus stop, the one everyone pretends not to see. You've seen them. Maybe you've looked away. This chapter is about looking back. About slowing down. About the radical, counter-cultural act of seeing another human being and saying their name.

Step 1 — Open Your Eyes

During your regular commute, begin to pay attention. Who do you see regularly? Who has a gentle spirit, even in the hardest of circumstances? Pray before you leave the house: “Lord, open my eyes to see who You are calling me toward today.” Start with just one person. Not ten. Not the whole city. One.

Step 2 — Begin with Simple Kindness

Stop at a drive-thru. Get an extra order—a burger, fries, whatever's simple. Hand it out the window with a smile. Keep a case of bottled water in your trunk. Grab a stack of \$5 pizzas and hand them out at the park. You don't need a speech. You don't need a program. You just need a pizza and a willingness to stop.

Step 3 — Learn Their Name

After a couple of encounters, ask the question that changes everything: “What's your name?” Then repeat it. Remember it. Write it down if you have to. Use it the next time you see them. “Hey, Brian—how have you been?” Names carry dignity. Names say: you are not invisible.

Step 4 — Ask How You Can Pray

Once some trust has been built—maybe after three or four encounters—ask gently: “Is there anything I can pray for you about?” Then listen. Really listen. Don’t rush. Don’t try to fix it. Those prayer needs are sacred ground.

Step 5 — Bring Them to God

At Mass, during the Offertory, during the Eucharistic Prayer, bring that person by name before God. Intercede for them. “Lord, I offer this Mass for Brian.” And then, in the silence after Communion, ask: “Lord, is this a calling for me?”

“I have called you by name; you are mine.” — Isaiah 43:1

Start with one. Just one. That one person has a name. That one name has a story. That one story belongs to God. And when you bring them before the Lord at Mass—when you stand at the altar of sacrifice and say, ‘This is for Brian’—you are doing something ancient and holy.

Chapter 4: The Retirement Home — The Ministry of Presence

There is a loneliness in assisted living that is almost unbearable to witness—and yet it is one of the most accessible mission fields in your zip code. Residents who once had full, bustling lives now wait. They wait for meals. They wait for the next medication round. They wait for visitors who never come. They wait for someone—anyone—to ask about the photograph on the nightstand. You can be that someone. You can be the face that breaks the monotony, the voice that says: you matter. Your story matters. You are not forgotten.

The Practical Start — Making the Calls

Pick up the phone. Call three to five assisted living or memory care facilities near you. Ask to speak with the activities director or the volunteer coordinator. Say something simple: ‘I’m looking for a way to volunteer my presence. How might I help?’ Be specific about your gifts if you have them. But even if you have no ‘talents,’ you have the most important thing: your presence. Your time. Your willingness to show up. That’s enough.

Ways to Serve

- **Musical Talent** — Coffee house nights, holiday sing-alongs, simple acoustic performances. You don’t have to be a professional. Sing hymns. Sing oldies. Sing songs they remember from their youth and watch their faces light up.

- **Bingo and Game Nights** — Be the caller. Be the assistant. Hand out prizes. The joy on their faces when they shout “BINGO!” is pure, unfiltered delight. Don’t underestimate the power of play.
- **Kitchen Demonstrations** — Food Network-style fun in the kitchenette. Make cookies. Let them help. Let them teach you their recipes. Food is memory. Food is love. Food is communion in the most human sense.
- **Communion Service** — Partner with your parish to bring the Eucharist to homebound Catholics. For someone who hasn’t received Communion in months—or years—you are bringing them Jesus Himself. Do not underestimate the holiness of this act.
- **Pen Pal Ministry** — Written letters for isolated residents, especially those with no nearby family. In an age of texts and emails, a handwritten letter is a treasure. It says: I thought of you. You are worth the stamp and the ink and the effort.
- **Simply Sitting** — Sometimes the greatest ministry is just showing up repeatedly and being interested in someone’s life. Sit. Listen. Ask questions. “Tell me about your husband.” “What was your job like?” You are not there to fix or solve. You are there to witness.

Building Real Relationships

At university, I used to invite students to serve with me at a local retirement home. I told them: this is the easiest on-ramp to making a real difference. Even the awkward encounters are not a big deal. Even the grumpy encounters are not a reason to quit. Over time, we kept choosing to be present. And slowly, imperceptibly, we became like family to those residents. They looked for us. They waited for us. They saved their stories for us. That is the ministry. Not a program. A relationship.

Chapter 5: The Parish — Serving the Church From the Inside

Your parish is not just a place you go on Sunday. It is a community—imperfect, beautiful, sometimes messy, always in need of your gifts. And the door to serving there is easier to open than you think. You don’t need a theology degree. You don’t need to be a saint. You just need to be willing to show up and say: ‘How can I help?’

The First Move — Make the Call

Contact your local Catholic parish. Ask to speak with the DRE (Director of

Religious Education). A simple message is enough: ‘I’m interested in serving in Faith Formation. Is there a way I might help?’ Parish ministry is almost always understaffed and over-loved. Your offer to help will be a gift.

Finding Your Fit

Start as a classroom assistant in Faith Formation or CCD. You don’t have to be the teacher. You don’t have to have all the answers. Just show up for the children. Help with crafts. Help the quiet kid in the back who needs someone to notice them and say: ‘You did a great job today.’

Other entry points: RCIA (welcoming those entering the Church), children’s Liturgy of the Word, youth ministry, sacramental prep assistance for First Communion or Confirmation, hospitality teams, or even just being the person who sets up chairs and brews the coffee. Every act of service in the Church—no matter how small—is an act of love for the Body of Christ.

The Principle: Start Small, Stay Faithful

You don’t have to arrive with a full program or a five-year plan. You just have to arrive. Faithfulness over time is what creates transformation—in those you serve and in yourself. Show up. Be consistent. Be kind. Be present. That’s it. That’s the whole playbook.

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.” — Colossians 3:23

Once again—bring these children, these families, these parishioners before God at Mass. Present your ministry at the Offertory. Offer it like the bread and wine: ‘Lord, take this. Use it. Transform it into something holy.’

PART FOUR

The Rhythm of the Servant Life

Chapter 6: Prayer — The Engine Behind Everything

A servant spirit is constantly looking for ways to subtract the superficial from life—to create space for what actually matters: people, encounter, presence, God. This isn’t about being busy. It’s about being intentional. It’s about choosing depth over distraction, relationships over reels, presence over productivity. And at the heart of that choice is prayer.

Service, prayer, and community flow together like an alternator in a car—each one powers the other. Your prayer flows into your service. Your service fuels your prayer. Your community deepens both. You cannot sustain a life of service without prayer. And your prayer will never feel fully alive until you are serving the people God is calling you to love.

A Simple Prayer Practice — Lectio Divina

Choose one of these Scripture passages. Read it once slowly, looking for a word or phrase that sticks out to you. Don't rush. Just notice. Read it a second time, focusing on that word or phrase. Let it sit in your heart. Then ask: 'God, what are You trying to tell me here?' Wait. Listen. Don't force it. The answer will come.

Matthew 25:31–46 | Mark 12:41–44 | Luke 14:12–14

1 John 3:17–18 | Matthew 5:1–11 | Isaiah 58:10

“The fruit of prayer is faith. The fruit of faith is love. The fruit of love is service.” — St. Teresa of Calcutta

Chapter 7: Fasting — Solidarity with the Poor

Pray and fast for the poor—and watch your heart change. It's one of the oldest spiritual practices in the Church, and it still works. When you let yourself be hungry—for food, for comfort, for the things you want—you enter into a kind of spiritual solidarity with those who have nothing. You taste, however briefly, what it feels like to go without. And in that hunger, you create space. Space where God can move. Space where compassion can grow.

Fasting also reminds you not to fill yourself up with the things of this world. It points you back to what Jesus said: 'Let God's will be your food' (John 4:34). Traditional fasting means abstaining from food for an entire day—usually bread and water only. But you can also fast in small, accessible ways: skip one meal, give up television for a week, give up a pleasurable habit for a season. The goal is space. Space where God moves. Space where you can finally hear.

Chapter 8: Almsgiving — When Your Wallet Follows Your Heart

After prayer and fasting, comes the third pillar: almsgiving. Make a commitment—with your money and with your time. Look honestly at your spending and ask: What can I give up to serve the poor? What can I redirect? What am I holding onto that God is asking me to let go?

Two hours a month. That's the beginning. Two hours—the length of a movie, the time it takes to scroll your phone on a lazy Saturday afternoon—to step into someone else's life and become the hands and feet of Jesus. If you can give more, give more. If two hours is all you have, give two hours fully, joyfully, without reservation.

Almsgiving doesn't have to be complicated. Keep a case of water in your car. Keep \$5 pizza gift cards in your glove box. Have a bag of granola bars ready. Stock up on socks—socks are gold on the street. Give cash when you feel called to. Give without expecting anything in return. That's what makes it holy.

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap.” — Luke 6:38

PART FIVE

The Think, Do, Pray, Share Cycle

Chapter 9: How You Actually Grow — Experiential Learning

There is a reason Jesus didn't hand His apostles a manual. He didn't give them a three-ring binder with laminated tabs and a glossary in the back. He said: 'Come. Follow me.' (Matthew 4:19) He took them into villages. He let them watch Him heal the sick, cast out demons, feed the hungry. He let them try. He let them fail. Then, when they came back, He asked them: 'What did you learn?'

That pattern—follow, go, encounter, return, reflect—is the oldest formation model in history. Transformation doesn't happen in a classroom. It happens in the field. It happens when you hand someone a sandwich and they cry because no one has looked them in the eye in three days. This is the cycle: Think. Do. Pray. Share. And then begin again.

THINK

Before you serve, bring your whole self to the question. What do I notice? Where am I being drawn? What do I have to give? What scares me? What excites me? Sit with it. Bring it to God. Let it be a prayer. Discernment is not a luxury. It's the foundation.

DO

Go. Show up. Hand out the pizza. Knock on the retirement home door. Send the email to the DRE. You do not need to feel ready. You do not need to have all the

answers. You just need to go. The learning happens in the doing. The courage comes in the obedience.

PRAY

After every act of service, stop. Even for just five minutes. Sit in your car before you drive away. Ask: What did I notice? Where did I see God? What moved me? What was hard? Bring those experiences to Mass. Offer them at the altar. Let the Eucharist become the space where your encounters are transformed into encounter with Christ Himself.

SHARE

Tell someone what you experienced. Invite a friend to come with you next time. Share the story—not to brag, but to witness. To say: “This is what God is doing. And you’re invited into it too.” The story is the invitation. The invitation is the evangelization. People don’t argue with transformation. They lean in. They ask questions. They say, “How can I be part of that?”

“Make service part of your routine, then share your experience and invite people in.”

PART SIX

Building Your Service Community

Chapter 10: From One to Many — How a Community Grows

Start on your own. Or bring one friend you trust—someone who won’t bail when it gets awkward, someone who shares your heart for this, someone who will show up even when it’s raining and the parking is terrible and you’d both rather be home watching a movie. Pick a service idea that takes two to four hours per month. Do it. Do it again. Do it a third time. Let it become a rhythm. Let it become part of who you are.

Once you have three to four people, it’s time to make it a thing. Not a big, official, tax-exempt thing. Just a thing. A community. A little band of people who are saying yes to God together. Gather once a month and do four things—these four habits are the heartbeat of every healthy service community:

1. Serve Together

Go to the retirement home together. Hand out food together. Teach Faith Formation together. There is power in togetherness. There is joy in shared mission.

2. Worship Together

Before you serve, or after, or both—go to Mass or Adoration together. Let the Eucharist be the center. Let Jesus be the fuel. You cannot sustain this without Him.

3. Feast Together

Get a meal together and enjoy real fellowship. Break bread. Laugh. Tell stories. Be human with each other. Community is not just about the work. It's about the people.

4. Reflect Together

Discuss with Scripture. Ask: What did we see? Where did we encounter God? Use the Think, Do, Pray, Share cycle. Let the Word of God be your guide.

Build Intentionally

Share your project with people you respect. Not with a sales pitch. Just with a story. 'I've been doing something that's been changing me. Would you want to come once and see what it's about?' That's it. That's the invitation. No pressure. No guilt. Just an open door.

Reach Out to Your Parish

When you're ready to grow beyond your core group, reach out to your parish. Get a blurb in the bulletin. Create simple flyers and hand them out after Mass. But remember: you are not building an organization. You are not starting a nonprofit. You are extending a table. You are saying, 'There's room here. Come and see.'

My closest friends today are the ones I served with. My strongest, most authentic peer friendships came from circles of service. I believe with everything in me that you find good people by doing good things. And when you find them, hold on. Serve together. Pray together. Laugh together. Become family.

PART SEVEN

Evangelization Through Love — The Threefold Encounter

Chapter 11: The Invitation That Changes Everything

Every conversion story has a moment. Not usually a sermon. Not usually an argument won or a theological debate settled. Usually a person. Someone who showed up. Someone who slowed down. Someone who offered pizza and asked a name. Someone who sang 'How Great Thou Art' in a retirement home on a random

Tuesday afternoon. Someone who helped a second-grader color a picture of the Last Supper and said, with absolute sincerity, ‘You did a beautiful job.’

Evangelization through love is not a program. It is a posture. It is the decision to see every encounter as sacred ground, every conversation as a potential doorway to grace, every person as a beloved child of God who is one invitation away from encountering Him in a whole new way. This is the heart of Catholic service. We serve because we have encountered the Living God, and we cannot keep Him to ourselves. We serve because love, if it is real, always moves outward.

The Threefold Encounter

Here is the secret, the sacred pattern at the heart of everything: In every act of service—on the street, in the retirement home, in the parish classroom—three encounters are always happening at once.

- **ENCOUNTER WITH GOD** — Through prayer, through the Eucharist, through intercession, through the stillness that comes after you serve and you sit in your car and realize: I just met Jesus. He was wearing a torn jacket and sitting on a bench, and I handed Him a sandwich. That was Him.
- **ENCOUNTER WITH THE POOR** — The face of Christ in the marginalized, the lonely, the forgotten, the ones the world walks past. “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 25:40) This is not metaphor. This is Jesus telling you plainly: when you serve them, you serve Me.
- **ENCOUNTER WITH THE CHURCH** — The Body of Christ made visible, made real, made warm and particular through community. You are not alone in this. You are part of something two thousand years old and two billion people strong. You are part of the Communion of Saints, the great cloud of witnesses, the family of God scattered across every nation and age.

JESUS, THE LIVING WATER

“Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst again. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” — John 4:14

When you serve, you are not just doing a good deed. You are drinking from the Living Water. And you are holding out the cup to someone who is desperately, achingly thirsty. That is the heart of Catholic service. That is the invitation you are

extending every single time you stop, and slow down, and see another human being.

The Rhythm That Holds

ENCOUNTER JESUS → SERVE → EUCHARIST → PRAY → GATHER → BEGIN AGAIN

Jesus is the Living Water because we encounter Him in each place He clearly names: in the Eucharist, in prayer, in the gathered Church, and in the least of these. He is also the Bread of Life. These are not separate lanes of discipleship; they belong together. Too often the least of these is the missing connector. When that piece is absent, the whole system strains—like an alternator missing from an engine, forcing everything to limp along on a direct battery charge. Something vital is missing.

A lifestyle of service works the same way. It has to become part of our schedule. We cannot live on one act of charity a week any more than we can live a life of fitness by visiting the gym once in a while, or nourish the body by eating all our vegetables in one sitting and ignoring them the rest of the week. Service is not an occasional add-on for especially generous days. It is part of how we encounter Jesus seven days a week.

And if we are honest, this is exactly where many of us get pulled off course. We get absorbed into the consumption cycles of modern media culture. We get mentally and spiritually subscribed to sports, work, endless scrolling, and the next distraction. But how can we really live a mission of service if all our attention is already spoken for? The call of this book is simple: encounter Jesus, serve, receive the Eucharist, pray, and gather with others who are trying to live the same yes.

We were never meant to do this alone. Jesus says where two or three are gathered, He is there among them. None of us knows what tomorrow will bring. What will life look like one or two years from now—with family, work, friendships, health, or responsibility? That is exactly why community matters. We are all a little like penguins awkwardly shuffling when we begin something new. But if we keep showing up, if we serve obediently, God meets us in every one of these pillars. He becomes Living Water in our lives—and God shows off.

“Come and see.” — John 1:39

APPENDIX

Service Ideas

- **Feed the Homeless** — Keep a case of water in your car. Keep \$5 pizza gift cards in your glove box. Grab a stack of hot pizzas and hand them out in parks or under overpasses. Hand out drive-thru orders. Ask names. Ask for prayer requests. Be present. Be kind. Be consistent.
- **Adopt-A-Grandparent** — Visit elderly and homebound residents in assisted living or nursing homes. Bring music, baked goods, crafts, handwritten letters. Ask the facility about specific needs—maybe someone who never gets visitors, maybe someone whose family lives far away. Become their family.
- **Parish Faith Formation** — Contact your DRE. Start as a class assistant. Show up faithfully. Be the person kids are excited to see. Bring your presence, your patience, your love.
- **Youth Mentorship** — Find a sports team, a Church youth group, or a community volunteer program. Give your time and presence to help young people grow. Be the adult who shows up. Be the one who believes in them.
- **Meal Train** — Organize a group to take turns making meals for families who are grieving, for new parents, for anyone going through a hard season. Food is love. Deliver it with a smile and zero expectations.
- **Dial-A-Smile** — Make a list of isolated friends, elderly relatives, or people you know who live alone. Call them randomly throughout the month—just to say: “I was thinking of you. How are you?” Listen. Laugh. Share. Connect.
- **Communion to the Homebound** — Partner with your parish to bring the Eucharist to Catholics who cannot attend Mass due to age, illness, or disability. Bring them Jesus. This is one of the holiest things you will ever do.
- **Pen Pal Ministry** — Write handwritten letters to retirement home residents, prisoners, or anyone who is isolated. A handwritten letter is a treasure. It says: someone took time for me. I am not forgotten.
- **Sock and Supply Drives** — Organize drives for socks (always needed), hygiene kits, blankets, or winter coats. Partner with a local shelter and deliver the items directly. Meet the people. Learn their names. Make it personal.

For more resources, retreat guides, and community-building tools, visit:
serviceontheschedule.org

CLOSING

The Living Water

You picked up this guide because something in you stirred. Maybe it was a face you passed on the street and couldn't shake from your memory. Maybe it was a quiet, persistent feeling at Mass that whispered: there must be more than this. Maybe it was a restlessness that modern life could not quiet. That stirring—that holy discontent, that sacred ache—is the Holy Spirit. Don't ignore it. Don't wait until you feel more ready, more qualified, or more holy. Listen to it. Follow it. Let it lead you out the door and into the life you were made for.

Begin today. Not someday. Not when everything finally settles down. Today. One act. One name. One prayer. One moment of stopping long enough to see another human being and let their humanity change you. The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. (Matthew 9:37) So be a worker. Be the one who shows up. Be the one who remembers the name, sits with the lonely, prays for the forgotten, and invites another person to come and see.

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.
Where there is poverty, let me bring generosity.
Where there is loneliness, let me bring presence.
Where there is hunger—for food, for love, for God—
let me be Your hands and Your feet.

Make my yes someone else's encounter with You.

Amen.

— Inspired by St. Francis of Assisi

Begin today. Show up. Serve obediently. Let God show off.

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