

31 Days of the Little Way: Not Just Doing a Job

My husband and I were attending an event at his workplace when he spotted a crumpled napkin on the ground. Without hesitation, he picked it up and threw it away.

That small action reminded me that especially this month, as I have been looking for holiness in the little things, I have really seen it in the people I encounter as they are simply doing their jobs.

There are the teachers and staff at our school, who always greet me with such pleasure, but many of the people who make me stop and think are not even people I know by name—the smiling cashiers and waiters, for example.



There was that salesman who paused to give our children a rundown on how to catch the most Pokemon in the mall.

There are the landscapers I see meticulously and reverently mowing the grass around the gravestones at the cemetery.

There are my younger son's speech therapists, who seem to be as excited about his participation in the children's choir as I am.

And there was that kind employee at the dollar store who went out of her way to make sure I didn't find just a spray bottle, but an attractive translucent one with a pastel tint. Her enthusiasm for her job and the merchandise in the store made me stop and think about what I enjoy most about my job. I should want to help people find the most beautiful spray bottle, too.

None of those people are saving lives through their work. But when I consider how much joy they can bring through a simple gesture, how much care they can bring to a brief interaction in the midst of a busy day, I am astounded at the holiness those actions contain.

It reminds me of our dear friend, now deceased, Fr. Tom Pietrantonio, OFM Cap. I asked him once how he knew he wanted to be a priest, and he told me he was just a boy when he realized he was being called. He was watching a Franciscan opening the windows of a chapel, gently, carefully, prayerfully—and he knew he wanted to approach life that same way. And he did.

That's really something for me to strive for—that sense of finding joy in the little tasks, treating every little encounter with people, both in my workplace and in my home, as important.

