

## **“Something Special”**



One Friday, sensing a high degree of anxiety in the classroom, the high school teacher said, *“Look, put away your books. Everybody take out a piece of paper and list each of the other students’ names on that paper, and write something nice about each one.”*

That’s what the students did for the entire class. She collected the papers, she went home, and over the weekend she listed the names of all the students and all the nice things the people had to say about them. When she went in on Monday morning, she gave the papers out to each one. And immediately the tenor of the class changed. She even overheard one of the pupils whisper to another that *“I never knew that anybody thought anything nice about me.”* And so they were able to progress.

The years went by, students came and went, and eventually they had one of those necessary class reunions. When they gathered around their old teacher, one of the fellows opened up his wallet and pulled out a ragged piece of paper that obviously had been folded and refolded many times. The teacher recognized it immediately as the list she had given to them – to this lad and the others – many, many years ago. Another student told her how she had kept that list in her dresser drawer all these years. Another volunteered that she had this list pasted in her

wedding album. Another young man pulled out his wallet and showed that he, too, had carried his all this time.

The teacher was quite overwhelmed to think that a minor gesture to settle down a class many, many years ago had meant so much to these students. Someone had said something nice about them, and during the years when they were feeling low they would pull out this piece of paper. They then would remember that to somebody they were of value, that they mattered, that something was good in their lives.

The teacher never realized that she was planting a small seed; she certainly was not intending a grand gesture. But it was a situation that Jesus would appreciate and say, *"The Kingdom of God is like this."*  
(See: W.J. Bausch, *A World of Stories*, #62)

Have I said anything positive about or done anything good to another person today?

Do I need new glasses to see the good in the person next to me or can't my heart recognize a brother or sister in them?

Did I think of others and reach out to anybody in need, -whether around me or in the missions overseas- over the past couple of months while struggling through the pandemic?

In my daily life do I practice a dialogue of words or a dialogue of life?

Am I respectful of, do I care for our common home, the world and the universe?

We have plenty of homework to do. Let's not waste time but take advantage of each present moment to make it an act of love and so "make of humanity one family."

Blessings and peace,

*Fr. Mark and the Xaverian Missionaries*