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There is a traffic light that I get stuck at every morning on my way to work, and at that corner there is usually someone holding a sign, always in different words but saying the same simple message: "Anything helps."

I see these signs during my commute to Hope Faith Homeless Assistance Campus, an incredible organization that I've had the pleasure of working with for two summers, through an internship program offered through the Bishop Sullivan Center and the Catherine Merrill Foundation in Kansas City. This program sends Catholic college students who are looking to grow their faith, in addition to their work experience, out to various nonprofits in the Kansas City area to spend the summer working directly with neglected communities.

At Hope Faith, I find myself overwhelmed with the kindness demonstrated by both the staff members and our clients every single day. Throughout the past year I have garnered a fuller understanding of the difficulties that face the homeless community, difficulties that go much deeper than not having a roof over your head or a meal to eat. I know that I cannot solve these problems for them. What I can do is help them meet their immediate needs, such as food, hygiene, clothes and shelter, so that they can focus their energy on their next step, whatever that may be.

Something else that I've learned at Hope Faith is the power of listening to someone who often gets ignored. I've realized that it's important to say hello when I see a person holding their sign on the corner, even if I have nothing to give. All it takes is a minute and a few words, and somehow it feels like I am letting them know that they are loved.

What I cherish the most though, is the longer conversations that I get to have with clients at Hope Faith. I speak with many guests daily, so I get to hear about their current struggles, and of their past successes and failures. Although I don't usually have any advice to give or wisdom to share on the problems they are facing, I think it's beneficial to both of us to hear the trials of homelessness said out loud.

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When I find myself drawing away from God, uncomfortable with prayer and feeling that it is useless, I remind myself that I can see in my own life how much reflection can help people solve problems and understand their lives and actions more deeply.

I wonder if God sees prayer as a gift to myself rather than as an adherence to him. He listens, but he listens for me. When I think of it that way, it makes sense why God wants us to tell him what we are going through even though he is said to be all-knowing. God knows what we need, and he knows the best way to guide us there without giving us all the answers.

Usually I don't have money or food to give to the people on the corner, but I always roll down my window to smile, say "Hello" and listen if I have a minute before the light changes. It's not a big action and it doesn't take any effort, but you can never guess how much a person just needs to feel acknowledged; to feel a little bit of humanity, especially when they are denied it constantly.

If their signs say "anything" helps, they really do mean anything. And anything can change everything if you see it as an opportunity to share joy, and give love with every moment.

[Hannah Clemens is a senior at Rockhurst University studying political science, with plans to pursue her master's in social work after graduation.]