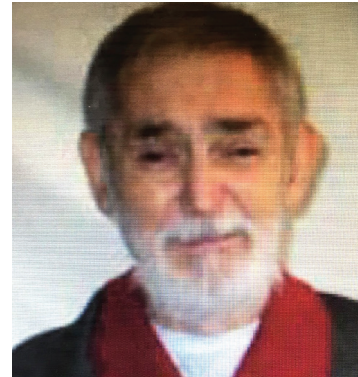


“When it comes to
HUMAN DIGNITY,
we **cannot** make
COMPROMISES.”

- **Angela Merkel**, Chancellor of Germany



Love and Compassion in Service



The Latin term “**Imago Dei**” refers to all **human beings made in the image of God.**

Twenty years ago, a few months after starting a position with Catholic Social Services, I was offered the opportunity to work with Mervyn, a man born deaf and who by the age of twenty had lost his eyesight as well. Not surprisingly, I was informed that he was deeply depressed. Initially, I felt depressed just thinking about the complexity of trying to communicate with a man who could not see, hear, or speak. As I was about to give an excuse, I reminded myself that ... **everyone without compromise is an image of God**, and that with God’s grace this relationship might somehow lead to transformational growth for both Mervyn and me.

Mervyn was sitting in a high-back chair waiting for me. I pulled up a chair and, brought it so close that our knees knocked. That one little touch caused him to open his hands to me, and his whole body arched forward in anticipation. Mervyn was ready to “**receive.**” I immediately placed my hands in his, and through the gift of presence – communicated with the touching of fingers and holding and movement of hands – a vulnerable and meaningful friendship was born.

A few months later, I asked Mervyn if he was mad at God for allowing his sight to be taken away, after being born deaf. My jaw dropped in awe as Mervyn signed into my hands, “***No, I am not angry at God, because God has given me blessing after blessing after blessing!***”

For the next year, I was deeply moved by our bi-weekly meetings. What did I “*see*” and feel as my hands embraced his during those sessions? I saw and felt “*imago Dei*” – a “*broken and blessed*” **image of God** - in a man whose human dignity could never be compromised, a man whose mere presence was an unspeakable gift to me.

Now... twenty years later, I am so grateful to witness this same transforming love every day as our Don Guanella, Divine Providence and St. Edmond’s staff recognize God’s beautiful image in every one of the men, women and children we so proudly and lovingly serve.

Kevin Barr

Director of Development
The Communities of Don Guanella and Divine Providence