



Works of Mercy

Corporal Works of Mercy

The Corporal Works of Mercy help us to know how to respond to our neighbor's bodily needs. They come directly from Jesus' own words in the Gospel of Matthew: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me" (Matthew 25: 34-36). The Corporal Work of Mercy "Bury the Dead" comes from the Book of Tobit: "Whenever I saw that the dead body of one of my people had been thrown outside the city wall, I gave it a decent burial" (Tob 1:17).

**Shelter the Homeless • Visit the Sick • Give Drink to the Thirsty • Feed the Hungry
Clothe the Naked • Visit the Prisoner • Bury and Mourn the Dead**

The Spiritual Works of Mercy

The Spiritual Works of Mercy also help us to meet the deeper, more transcendent longings and needs of our neighbor. The needs of our brothers and sisters that concern our deepest questions and, ultimately, our relationship with God. The Spiritual Works of Mercy are drawn from a variety of Old and New Testament Sources.

**Admonish the sinner • Instruct the ignorant • Counsel the doubtful • Comfort the sorrowful
Bear wrongs patiently • Forgive all injuries • Pray for the living and the dead**

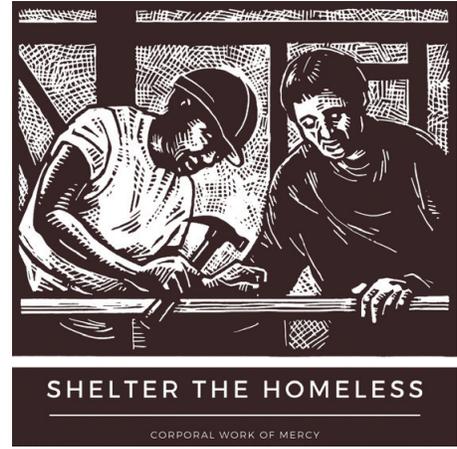
Corporal Work of Mercy: Shelter the Homeless

PONDER

People experience homelessness for many different reasons. Our faith encourages us to reach out and encounter those without the stability of a home, affirming their human dignity, and assisting them in seeking solutions to the challenges they face.

ACT

- * Volunteer with a local homeless shelter—in the current COVID-19 world you can write letters of encouragement to the residents of the shelter.
- * Many homeless shelters need blankets or masks for their guests—if you sew, making these can be a way of sharing your gifts with those in need.
- * Donate to the work of a homeless shelter, whether monetarily or through needed items and goods.
- * Consider collecting items for the local homeless shelter from your community. Ask what items are needed and what items might not seem as essential but create a sense of joy for those in need, i.e. makeup or perfume.
- * Research the causes of homelessness in your area and advocate for strategies and solutions.



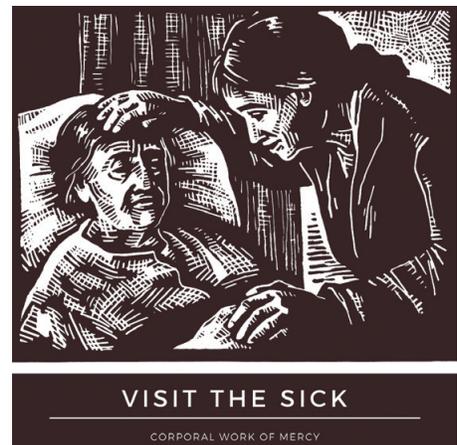
Corporal Work of Mercy: Visit the Sick

PONDER

Those who are sick experience not just physical suffering, but also the pain of isolation, especially in these times of COVID-19. While in-person visits may not be possible at the present moment, there are many creative ways to bring comfort to those who are ill.

ACT

- * Allow your own experience of loneliness during this time of quarantine to deepen your compassion for those who are ill and alone.
- * Send cards or flowers to those in the hospital or nursing home.
- * Offer to shop or cook for those caring for chronically sick family members to limit their exposure.
- * Make signs thanking the health care workers in your community.
- * Donate blood if possible.
- * If you are musically gifted, you may sing or play music to bring joy to those who are sick.



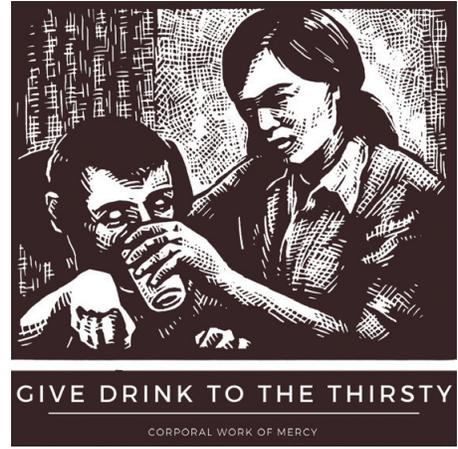
Corporal Work of Mercy: Give Drink to the Thirsty

PONDER

Access to water is a vital necessity, especially in the hot months of summer and during this pandemic. Yet for many people, water can be difficult to come by, especially clean water for drinking and hand-washing. How might we provide support to those around us and support the efforts of those working towards greater accessibility of this essential resource across the globe?

ACT

- * Since thorough hand-washing is important, be sure to avoid wasting water in other ways (turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth or washing dishes).
- * Collect bottled water to donate to those suffering from homelessness and others who lack this basic necessity.
- * Donate to an organization that helps to build wells for water for those in need.
- * Pay for someone else's coffee/drink at a café.
- * Avoid buying or hoarding more water than you need.



Corporal Work of Mercy: Feed the Hungry

PONDER

Food is essential for life, but many people around the world as well as in our own communities do not have enough to eat. How can we help provide for those who hunger and limit the amount of food that goes to waste?

ACT

- * Check with your local food pantry to ensure it is fully stocked and donate what you can.
- * Volunteer to help distribute food or offer to shop for those at-risk who cannot grocery shop for themselves during the pandemic.
- * Contribute financially to organizations that serve the hungry.
- * Donate food to a local soup kitchen or volunteer to help serve meals if possible with social distancing.
- * To avoid waste, purchase fewer groceries and contribute the savings to those in need.
- * Pick up leftovers from local grocery stores and deliver them to a food bank.
- * Consider making a meal or setting up meals for those who might need the extra support during times of struggle or need, i.e. single mothers, those who are sick, elderly, homebound, etc.



Corporal Work of Mercy: Clothe the Naked

PONDER

There are many people who lack basic resources beyond food and water, while we may have resources in abundance. Support organizations that care for the poor and vulnerable and become more aware of how our consumption can affect others.

ACT

- * Give up a particular item that you might normally spend money on and donate the funds to an organization that might be in need.
- * Go through your closet and give away things (in good condition) that you don't need.
- * The pandemic has increased the economic instability of so many—reach out to those you know who might be facing additional burdens with support and compassion.
- * Hold a baby shower for a mom in need.
- * Consider reaching out to organizations that help children who might be in foster care, living in a homeless shelter, etc. and provide items like games, puzzles, books, and stuffed animals to brighten their day.



CLOTHE THE NAKED

CORPORAL WORK OF MERCY

Corporal Work of Mercy: Visit the Prisoner

PONDER

People may be imprisoned for many reasons, and without dismissing the suffering caused by those who commit crimes, all people retain their dignity as created in the image and likeness of God. No matter what someone has done, they are still a son or daughter of God and thus should be loved and treated as one.

ACT

- * Volunteer to help out or donate to charities that give Christmas presents to children whose parents are in prison.
- * Send cards or letters to prison inmates.
- * See if your parish, or a nearby parish, has a prison ministry and if so, get involved.
- * Given that people in prison can be especially isolated and vulnerable during this pandemic, consider how to support those who are ministering to them and bringing them the Word of God.



VISIT THE PRISONER

CORPORAL WORK OF MERCY

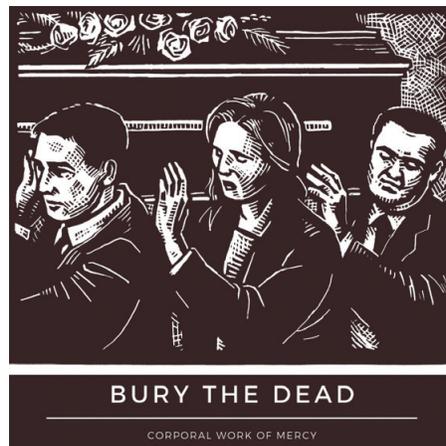
Corporal Work of Mercy: Bury and Mourn the Dead

PONDER

Participating in funerals shows support for those who suffer loss while also giving us a chance to grieve. The rituals around death are an opportunity to show our respect for the gift of life and provide space to process the inevitable passing from this earthly life to eternal life.

ACT

- * Attend the wakes and/or funerals of people you know (as possible during this time of COVID-19).
- * Support your parish's Bereavement Ministry (funeral planning & grief ministry).
- * Visit the cemetery to pray for those who have died and those facing death this day. You may even bring flowers for a grave site or organize a group to bring flowers for a larger section of the cemetery and offer prayers.
- * Offer to help clean up the grounds at a local cemetery.
- * Volunteer or donate to support the work of hospice centers.
- * Help your parish plan a mass for those who have lost a child at any stage.
- * Pray for those who have died: "Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon him/her. May he/she rest in peace. Amen. May his/her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen."



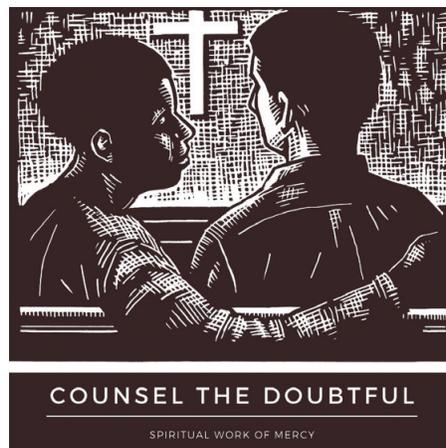
Spiritual Work of Mercy: Counsel the Doubtful

PONDER

In the journey of faith, we encounter moments of doubt at different times and situations. Grounded in the belief that Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6) we turn to him with trust and encourage others to do the same.

ACT

- * When someone asks you for advice, think about how Christ's life can guide you as you listen and respond to them.
- * Accompany a friend who is struggling with believing by first listening to them. Seek to understand their context and what they are seeking. Encourage them to turn to Jesus to share their feelings and questions. Invite them to share in activities that help them to experience Christ's love concretely.
- * Let your life give witness to Christ so others see God's love revealed through you.



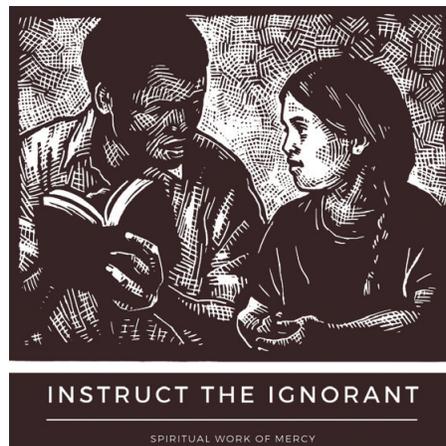
Spiritual Work of Mercy: Instruct the Ignorant

PONDER

Ignorance is most simply a lack of knowledge, in this case the knowledge of Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6). Take the time to reflect on the aspects of our faith that you are passionate about. What excites you and gives you joy about our faith? Think about how you might share that joy with others.

ACT

- * Take advantage of this time to learn more about your faith through reading and study.
- * Prepare yourself for the common questions people ask about the Catholic faith so you are ready to respond.
- * Learn more about what it means that every single individual is made in the image and likeness of God. Consider a creative way of sharing this teaching with others.
- * Be intentional about giving witness to your faith by radiating the love and peace found in relationship with Christ. Speak with love.
- * If public masses are offered in your area, invite a friend to join you for mass and explain what will happen so they are comfortable with the liturgy.
- * If attending mass is not possible, invite a friend to watch the same livestream mass as you teach them how to make a Spiritual Communion.



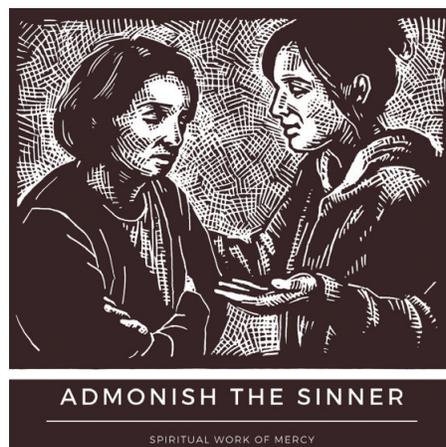
Spiritual Work of Mercy: Admonish the Sinner

PONDER

Pope Francis calls us not toward judgment that alienates, but toward compassion. In compassion we meet the other where they are, supporting and helping them to find their way, and correcting their mistakes as they walk more closely with Christ.

ACT

- * Spending an extended period of time at home with others during this time can lead to flare-ups of tension and conflict. Help each other recognize mistakes and be supportive of ways to correct one another in love.
- * Before pointing out corrections to someone who is struggling, take time to listen to what's wrong. Help them think through ways that God's love may reveal a different path. Be gentle and attentive to where they are and what they are capable of.
- * Strive to create a culture that does not accept sin, while realizing we all fall.
- * Recognize your own sinfulness and cultivate the virtues that help you grow in holiness.



Spiritual Work of Mercy: Pray for the Living and Dead

PONDER

Holding one another in prayer is one of the most important ways we can care for each other, living and dead, deepening our bonds of communion as we entrust our intentions to God.

ACT

- * Ask a friend or family member “How can I pray for you today?” and hold their intentions in prayer.
- * Write down the names of those you pray for in a book of prayer intentions and let them know you are praying for them.
- * Pray the rosary with family members, friends, or on your own for those suffering in this pandemic.
- * Say a prayer for a particular group—refugees, the homeless, the sick, etc.
- * Request a mass intention for a friend or family member who has passed away or is going through a tough time.
- * Name your own needs and desires to God in prayer, seeking to grow in vulnerability and authenticity.



PRAY FOR THE LIVING & THE DEAD
SPIRITUAL WORK OF MERCY

Spiritual Work of Mercy: Comfort the Sorrowful

PONDER

Mourning the loss of a loved one is always difficult, even more so in these times of social distancing and isolation. Reach out to those grieving even if you are unsure of what to say or do—your concern makes a real difference.

ACT

- * If you are struggling for words, say with compassion “I am sorry for your loss.”
- * When possible, attend the wake, funeral, or memorial service.
- * Write a letter or send a card to someone who is suffering to let them know you are thinking about them.
- * Pray for that person. Say a Hail Mary, Our Father, or pray to a particular saint for prayers and intercession in their life.
- * Set reminders for yourself to reach out to them again in a month, six weeks, or six months. People often receive a lot of support in the immediate aftermath of a loss but still need support in the weeks and months ahead.



COMFORT THE SORROWFUL
SPIRITUAL WORK OF MERCY

Spiritual Work of Mercy: Bear Wrongs Patiently

PONDER

While our faith compels us to speak out and work against injustice and suffering in the world, this Spiritual Work of Mercy encourages us to cultivate our interior disposition in response to the wrongs done to us. When we are treated harshly, lied about, cheated on, abandoned by a friend, persecuted, or physically injured, we can choose how to respond internally by turning to Jesus' example of patience, perseverance, and forgiveness.

ACT

- * Take a few moments to step away, take a few deep breaths, and pray for wisdom and guidance.
- * When tempted by bitterness, anger, or resentment, make the concrete choice to practice generosity, forgiveness, and compassion.
- * Pray the Stations of the Cross to walk with Jesus as he loved others while carrying His cross.
- * Consider the situation from God's point of view. How would God respond to you? How would God respond to that person?
- * Speak with someone who can offer you support as you navigate through the challenges.



BEAR WRONGS PATIENTLY

SPIRITUAL WORK OF MERCY

Spiritual Work of Mercy: Forgive all Injuries

PONDER

Forgiving others is difficult at times because we do not have God's limitless mercy and compassion. But Jesus teaches us that we should forgive as God forgives, relying on him to help us show others the mercy of God.

ACT

- * Go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. If the sacrament of Reconciliation is not available in your parish at this time, commit to making a regular examination of conscience
- * Ask a person's forgiveness for times you have wronged them.
- * Pray for a person who has wronged you.
- * Learn and/or teach your family members the Examen prayer and/or the Divine Mercy Chaplet.
- * During this time of quarantine and potentially being in close quarters with family members for long periods of time, take this opportunity to model the importance of forgiveness for those in your family.



FORGIVE ALL INJURIES

SPIRITUAL WORK OF MERCY