

## THE SPIRITUAL & CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY



"Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Lord, your God" (Jl 2:13). We hope that our practice of penance and prayers on this season of Lent will set our hearts to God who desires us to share in his love. So, our fasting from food and abstinence from meat during this forty-day Season of Lent, particularly on Fridays, are meant to lead us toward the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. "The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities. Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently. The

corporal works of mercy include feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead. Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing God" (Catechism of the Catholic Church # 2447).

7 Corporal Works of Mercy	Bible Reference	ACTIONS
<b>Feed the hungry</b>	Prov 22:9 Is 58:10 2 Kngs 4:42-44 Matt 14:15-21; 25:35 John 6:35	<p>Donate to a food drive so everyone can have something to eat. Research, identify, and contribute financially to organizations that serve the hungry.</p> <p>The next time you make a recipe that can be easily frozen, make a double batch and donate one to your local food pantry or soup kitchen.</p> <p>Try not to purchase more food than you can eat. If you notice that you end up throwing groceries away each week, buying fewer groceries would eliminate waste and allow you to donate the savings to those in need.</p>
<b>Give drink to the thirsty</b>	Isaiah 55:1 Mat 25:35 John 7:37-39 Rev 21:6; 22:17	<p>Donate to help build wells for water for those in need, and support the efforts of those working towards greater accessibility of this essential resource.</p> <p>Make an effort not to waste water. Remember to turn off the water faucet when brushing your teeth or washing dishes can help, especially in regions suffering from drought.</p>
<b>Shelter the homeless and cloth the naked</b>	Matt 25:35; Matt 25:36	<p>Involve with a local homeless shelter and volunteer some time. Many homeless shelters need warm blankets for their beds. If you can knit or sew, that would be an extra loving gift.</p> <p>Donate time or money to organizations that build homes for those who need shelter.</p>
<b>Visit the sick</b>	Matt 25:36	<p>Give blood</p> <p>Spend time volunteering at a nursing home. Take time on a Saturday to stop and visit with an elderly neighbor.</p> <p>Offer to assist caregivers of chronically sick family members on a one-time or periodic basis. Give caregivers time off from their caregiving responsibilities to rest, complete personal chores, or enjoy a relaxing break.</p>
<b>Visit the imprisoned</b>	Matt 25:36	<p>People in prison are still people, made in the image and likeness of God. No matter what someone has done, they deserve the opportunity to hear the Word of God and find the Truth of the message of Christ.</p> <p>Volunteer to help or donate to charities that give Christmas presents to children whose parents are in prison; get involved with prison ministry.</p>
<b>Bury the dead</b>	Tobit 1:17-19	<p>Send a card to someone who has recently lost a loved one. Make your own card and use some of these prayers.</p> <p>Visit the cemetery and pray for those you have lost.</p> <p>Spend time planning your own funeral mass, read through the Order of Christian Funerals and find our hope in the Resurrection.</p>
<b>Give alms to the poor</b>	Lk 12:33-34; Prov 19:17; 28:27 Tobit 4:7-17	<p>Donate money to organizations that provide support and services for those in need. Research and find organizations that put people in need first rather than profit.</p> <p>Skip the morning latte and put that money in the collection basket at church. Find a meaningful charity to volunteer your time or donate to.</p> <p>This Lent, give up eating out at restaurants. Pack your meals and donate the extra money to charities.</p>

7 Spiritual Works of Mercy	Bible Reference	ACTIONS
<b>Admonish the sinner</b>	Prov 27:17 Lk 15:7; 17:3 2 Tim 4:2	Do not judge; be supportive in helping others find their way and correct their mistakes. Together we can learn to walk more closely with Christ.  In humility, we must strive to create a culture that does not accept sin while realizing that we all fall at times. Don't judge, but guide others towards the path of salvation (see Mt 7:1-2). When you correct someone, don't be arrogant. We are all in need of God's loving correction.
<b>Instruct the ignorant</b>	Matt 28:19-20 Mk 16:14-18 Lk 24:47-49 John 20:21 2 Tim 3:16-17; 4:1-5	Learn about our faith and be open to talking with others about our beliefs. There is always something more to discover about our faith.  Go on a service trip or short-term mission trip. No time? Donate to support someone on their service trip.  Volunteer to help with religious education programs at your parish.  Invite someone to go to mass with you Know your faith! Read AND KNOW more about the Catholic faith and how to live it.
<b>Counsel the doubtful</b>	Matt 13:18-23 Mk 4:13-20; 9:14-29 Lk 8:11-15 John 14:27	Everyone has moments of doubt in their faith journey. Nevertheless, we should never forget that Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life and turn to him along the way.  Has someone asked you for advice? Orient your response to Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life  Follow Christ with the witness of your life so that others may see God's love revealed in your actions.  Accompany a friend who is struggling with believing to join a parish group for service or faith formation, share a book you found helpful in dealing with your friend's faith concern and worship at Sunday Mass.
<b>Bear wrongs patiently</b>	Matt 5:38-48 Lk 6:27-36 1 Pt 2:18-19	Do not be bitter about wrongs done against you. Place your hope in God so that you can endure the troubles of this world and face them with a compassionate spirit.  Frustrated with someone? Step away from the situation, take a few deep breaths, pray the Our Father, ask God for patience.
<b>Forgive offenses willingly</b>	Matt 6:14-15; 18:15-35 Mk 11:25 Lk 11:1-4; 17:1-4	Forgiving others is sometimes difficult 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.  Let go of grudges. Saying sorry is something we learn as kids, but how often do we really mean it? Forgiveness transforms hearts and lives.  Participate in the Sacrament of Penance. Pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet
<b>Comfort the afflicted</b>	Ps 9:8-11; Ps 27:4-5; Jer 29:11-14 Matt 11:28-30 John 14:15-18 2 Cor 5:17	Be open to listening and comforting those who are dealing with grief. Our presence can make a big difference even if we aren't sure of the right words to say.  Lend a listening ear to those going through a tough time.  Make a home-cooked meal for a friend facing a difficult time.  Write a letter or send a card to someone who is suffering. A few moments of your day may make a lifetime of difference to someone going through a difficult time.
<b>Pray for the living and the dead</b>	2 Maccabees 38-46	Prayer is one of the most powerful ways we can support others. Joining together in prayer for the living and the dead entrusts us all with God's care.  Request a mass intention for a friend or family member going through a tough time.  Request a mass intention for a friend or family member who has passed away.  Keep your own book of prayer intentions, writing down the names of those you keep in your prayers.  Ask a friend or family member if there is anything you can pray for them about.