



## *Catechesis on the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy*

**Visit the Imprisoned:** Visiting those in prison does not mean you are condoning the actions of those who have committed a crime. Rather, we can be part of the rehabilitation process for those in prison. Friendship and prayer have the capacity to reform and heal. A true work of mercy is done by Christians who befriend those in prison in the name of Jesus, thereby affirming their human dignity as persons made in the image of God. Such an action might be out of our “comfort zone” but prisoners need our attention too. Other works of mercy might include:

- Consider joining our parish Jail Ministry. This group meets twice a month with the inmates at the Huron County Jail for scripture study, prayer and discussion.
- Offer prayers and assistance to families of the imprisoned.
- When convicts are released, help them integrate back into society through job training, employment opportunities and welcoming them back into our parish community.
- Call or visit someone who you know is imprisoned by fear, or anxiety, or anger, or hatred. Your kindness can help to free them.

**Comfort the Sick:** Helping those who are sick in any way is an act of mercy. Comforting the sick includes people who are physically, mentally or terminally ill and those who suffer from social isolation. Offering a listening ear, or friendship, and our mere presence can be just the right medicine for our brothers and sisters who are ill.

- Spend time with people you know who are sick or homebound, or take the time to call, send flowers, a card, or e-mail them.
- Offer to stay with a sick person for an hour or two to give their caregiver a break.
- Visit someone in the hospital or the nursing home.
- Run an errand for a person who is ill or offer to drive them to a doctor’s appointment.

**Bear Wrongs Patiently:** It is an act of love and mercy to accept the aftermath of another’s thoughtlessness or carelessness and to suffer inconveniences which another should bear. When someone has wronged us, turn the other cheek. God wants us to exercise patience in these situations following Jesus’ example, who suffered greatly for us when he was innocent of any wrong-doing. Pray for patience and strive to put it into practice!

- Even when someone seems incapable of being kind to us, show kindness to them.
- We need to be patient when we have been wrongly accused of something.
- When we have suffered an injustice we should not retaliate but offer it up as a sacrifice.

**Forgive All Injuries:** It is an act of deep love to forgive all those who have injured us in any way. Christ demands that we have great love and forgiveness for one another and even for our enemies, in imitation of His own forgiveness of us. It is very difficult to forgive someone who has wronged us but if we fail to forgive, our hearts will be filled with hatred and that hatred will only grow more and become a heavy burden to bear. How might we put this Spiritual work of mercy into action?

- Open up your heart to God’s forgiveness by regularly celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Once we have experienced God’s healing and mercy we will be freed up to forgive others.
- Go directly to the person who has hurt you and restore your relationship with forgiveness.
- Reflect on the Prayer of St. Francis “Make me a channel of your peace” and work to pardon all injuries.

***“Be merciful just as the Father is merciful.”***  
Luke 6:36