



Catechesis on the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy

To clothe the naked. A necessity of life for everyone is clothing. It provides warmth, protection, dignity and modesty. It is therefore an act of mercy to help others obtain clothes especially the poor. Putting this Corporal work of mercy into action might include:

- Donating clothes or shoes in good condition that are no longer worn or fit, to agencies that provide assistance to the needy like the Salvation Army.
- Buying extra socks/underwear when shopping & give them to agencies that help those in need.
- Helping a younger family member get dressed in the morning or assisting with the laundry.

To shelter the homeless. As it is with clothing, having shelter is a necessity of life. Implementing this work of mercy might include:

- Contributing financially or volunteering time to organizations that provide homes to those in need such as Habitat for Humanity.
- Sharing your home with those who have been displaced by natural disasters.
- Supporting or working at a homeless shelter.
- Helping a neighbor or elderly family member with general upkeep or repairs to their home.
- Prayerfully considering adoption of a child or becoming a foster parent.
- Supporting the work of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in our parish.
- Helping to take care of your home by helping with cleaning and mowing the lawn.

To Counsel the doubtful. It is an act of love to help others who are struggling with major decisions in their life especially in matters involving faith or doubting their faith entirely. Helping them be certain in what they should be doing to serve God is a loving and important gesture. This work of mercy should be handled prayerfully, gently and prudently in order to reach the person you are trying to help. Here are some examples:

- Helping someone who is struggling with an unplanned pregnancy to understand the importance of the gift of life and realizing God is with them and truly loves them.
- Sharing your personal story of how Christ has revealed himself to you, to someone who doesn't believe in Him.
- Reading and studying our faith in order to be able to give advice to others that is consistent with Christ's teachings.

Comfort the Sorrowful. This is a Spiritual work of mercy in which we help others in their time of grief, grief that may be caused by a traumatic event in someone's life such as a death of a loved one or loss of a job, a divorce or diagnosis of an illness. Being there to listen and showing sincere sympathy to someone grieving is an act of love that comforts them, allowing them not to feel alone in their sorrow. Some examples might include:

- Sending a note or card of encouragement or sympathy to someone dealing with a painful event in their life.
- Offering words of encouragement to those who seem to be discouraged.
- Listening to someone who is in an abusive relationship and helping them find a counselor or therapist.
- Helping a recent widow or widower with skills that she/he may need in the absence of her/his spouse, like cooking, finances, yard work or laundry.
- Telling others who are very sorrowful for past actions, of the Mercy that is available to them in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

“Be merciful just as the Father is merciful.”

Luke 6:36