

The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy During the COVID-19 Pandemic

“Often it is the people closest to us who need our help. We should not go out in search of some unknown business to accomplish. It is better to begin with the simplest, which the Lord tells us is the most urgent.”

– Pope Francis General Audience (10/12/2016)

The Corporal Works of Mercy

The Corporal Works of Mercy are found in the teachings of Jesus and give us a model for how we should treat all others, as if they were Christ in disguise; they “are charitable actions by which we help our neighbors in their bodily needs” (*U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults*).

FEED THE HUNGRY

- Check in with your parish community to see if there are parishioners who cannot (or should not) go grocery shopping themselves.
- Check in with your parish to see if the food pantry is adequately stocked.
- Organize a network of volunteers in each parish/community to grocery shop for parishioners in need, especially the more vulnerable populations in our community.

GIVE DRINK TO THE THIRSTY

- Do not purchase or hoard more water than you need.
- While handwashing is vitally important, make an effort not to waste water—in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Christ who do not have access to clean water and suffer from the lack of this basic necessity.

SHELTER THE HOMELESS

- Consider donating toiletries and sanitary items to a local shelter since those who suffer homelessness—and the facilities that minister to them—are especially vulnerable at this time.
- Financially support organizations that are working to support the homeless population in your community.

VISIT THE SICK

- While in-person visits are not advisable during this time, please invest time in reaching out via phone/video call or by sending a letter or card to those who may feel particularly isolated during this time.
- Offer to assist caregivers of chronically sick family members by grocery shopping or cooking for them so they do not have to risk exposure.
- Reach out to health care workers in your community who may be overworked, burdened, or in need of specific support at this time.

VISIT THE PRISONERS

- Explore whether your parish or diocese has a prison ministry and, if so, check whether they are in need of supplies or support.
- 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.

BURY THE DEAD

- Now that funerals may be limited or restricted, reach out with cards or phone calls to those who have recently lost a loved one.
- If possible, visit the cemetery to pray for those you have lost—and to ask their intercession on behalf of all those facing death today.

GIVE ALMS TO THE POOR

- Reach out to those who may have been especially burdened during this pandemic, especially those whose occupations make them more vulnerable to economic instability.
- Remember that the lack of public celebration of Masses may result in parishes struggling financially in the next few months; be sure to continue your support and if possible, increase offerings for those who cannot donate due recent financial hardship or inability to work.
- Remember that Catholic Relief Services continues to serve the most vulnerable and consider making a donation or praying for them as you are able.

The Spiritual Works of Mercy

The Spiritual Works of Mercy have long been a part of the Christian tradition, appearing in the works of theologians and spiritual writers throughout history; just as Jesus attended to the spiritual well-being of those he ministered to, these Spiritual Works of Mercy guide us to “help our neighbor in their spiritual needs” (U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults).

COUNSELING THE DOUBTFUL

- Reassure and support those who may be especially anxious during this time.
- If someone asks you for advice, orient your response to Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

INSTRUCTING THE IGNORANT

- With public celebration of Masses unavailable, learn and/or teach someone else how to make a [Spiritual Communion](#).
- Take this time to recommit to your own study and formation and, for those home with children, take advantage of this time to reflect on the faith as a family.

ADMONISHING THE SINNER

- Being confined in close quarters for long periods of time with families or housemates can test us in more ways than one, so be supportive in helping others find their way and correct their mistakes.
- Recognize the reality of spiritual warfare in daily interactions and strive to cultivate the corresponding virtues needed to resist your personal temptations.

COMFORTING THE SORROWFUL

- Write a letter or send a card to someone who is suffering and let them know you are thinking of them.
- Remember that a few moments of your day may make a lifetime of difference to someone who is going through a difficult time.
- Consider sharing links to spiritual resources with those who may be isolated, such as livestreamed Masses, so that they can participate in community worship from home.

FORGIVING INJURIES

- For families, this time may maximize opportunities to exercise forgiveness, so take this

time to model the importance of forgiveness both for this life and the next.

- If the sacrament of Reconciliation is not available in your parish at this time, commit to making a regular [examination of conscience](#).
- Learn and/or teach your family members the [Examen prayer](#) and/or the [Divine Mercy Chaplet](#).







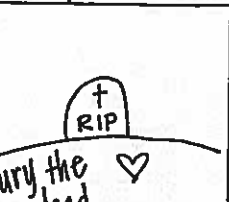
BEARING WRONGS PATIENTLY

- Practice developing and strengthening the virtues of temperance, prudence, fortitude, and justice.
- When frustrated with someone, step away from the situation, take a few deep breaths, and pray the Our Father, asking God for patience.
- Commit to praying the [Stations of the Cross](#) once a week.


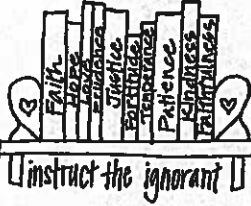



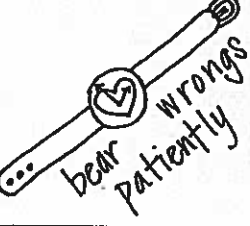

PRAYING FOR THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

- Pray the rosary with family members, via video conference or conference call if needed, for all those who are suffering from the effects of this pandemic.
- Keep your own book of prayer intentions, writing down the names of those who you are keeping in your prayers, and let people know that you are praying for them.
- Ask a friend or family member if there is anything you can pray for them about.

The Corporal Works of Mercy

 <p>Give food to the hungry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Give food to a homeless person <input type="checkbox"/> Donate to a food drive/pantry <input type="checkbox"/> Pay for the person behind you in the drive through <input type="checkbox"/> Bring meals to someone who is sick/recovering <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer to serve food in a shelter or home <input type="checkbox"/> Set the table, do the dishes, or help cook dinner for your family <input type="checkbox"/> Go shopping & deliver food to someone
 <p>Give drink to the thirsty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Donate water to shelters or in an emergency situation <input type="checkbox"/> Offer to get drinks for your friends or family members <input type="checkbox"/> Run a lemonade stand and donate the profits, or just give the drinks away for free <input type="checkbox"/> Take extra water/drinks with you to a sporting event and share <input type="checkbox"/> Pay for the person in the drivethru behind you
 <p>shelter the homeless</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer for organizations that build homes for people, have a fundraiser to help <input type="checkbox"/> Donate old furniture, pillows, blankets, etc. to those that need it <input type="checkbox"/> Know where safe places are and tell people about them <input type="checkbox"/> Help someone fix up their house that needs it <input type="checkbox"/> Invite people you know to stay with you when they need (traveling, buying a new house, in an emergency, foreign exchange student) <input type="checkbox"/> Pay a hotel room for someone who needs it, or help pay someone's rent
 <p>Clothe the naked</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Buy & donate coats for people who need them <input type="checkbox"/> Clean out your closet and donate to an organization or even a family you know <input type="checkbox"/> Collect baby items for moms in need <input type="checkbox"/> Make your own things to donate- hats, scarves, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Have a garage sale and donate the money
 <p>comfort the sick</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ask a priest to visit the sick person <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure that someone brings them Communion & Anointing of the Sick <input type="checkbox"/> Make a card, call them, bring a thoughtful gift like pillows, games, books, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Bring someone who is sick a home cooked meal <input type="checkbox"/> Spend time with them, especially if they are stuck at home or in the hospital <input type="checkbox"/> Help them with their medicine or even help pay their medical bills <input type="checkbox"/> Be extra nice to family members when they are sick
 <p>visit the imprisoned</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage your priest to visit someone in prison <input type="checkbox"/> Go and visit someone in prison, send care packages <input type="checkbox"/> Visit someone who is homebound, send cards, call them <input type="checkbox"/> Cook for someone who is homebound <input type="checkbox"/> Visit someone who is hospitalized or who is in residential care <input type="checkbox"/> Go caroling, play instruments, play games, read out loud,
 <p>bury the dead</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Attend funerals & visitations <input type="checkbox"/> Send cards and flowers to grieving family <input type="checkbox"/> Donate to a cause that is special to the family <input type="checkbox"/> Make food for the family <input type="checkbox"/> Visit a gravesite to pray <input type="checkbox"/> Go visit the family and comfort them <input type="checkbox"/> Help clean out the home of the deceased <input type="checkbox"/> Help pay bills related to the funeral

The Spiritual Works of Mercy

 <p>Counsel the doubtful</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Point someone to the good decision <input type="checkbox"/> Be encouraging <input type="checkbox"/> Willingly explain things <input type="checkbox"/> Share why you have hope <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage someone to talk to an expert, like a priest, teacher, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Pray that people would have faith <input type="checkbox"/> Pray for people with suicidal thoughts
 <p>Instruct the ignorant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Give people more time- don't rush them <input type="checkbox"/> If you are good at something, be willing to teach that skill to others <input type="checkbox"/> Be willing to tell stories that you know about the Bible, the Saints, etc. Talk about your faith <input type="checkbox"/> Don't think you are better than someone else because of your knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> Don't be prideful or arrogant when you know something
 <p>denounce the sinner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Kindly and privately talk to the person about the problem <input type="checkbox"/> Suggest that they go to Confession or get advice from a priest <input type="checkbox"/> Help them understand why something is wrong <input type="checkbox"/> Lead people towards the good choice in a situation <input type="checkbox"/> Stop the problem before it happens <input type="checkbox"/> Consider the causes and effects of the problem <input type="checkbox"/> Help them to know that even little things are a big deal
 <p>comfort the sorrowful</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pray for families that have lost loved ones <input type="checkbox"/> Offer comfort by baking them cookies, making a meal, sending a card <input type="checkbox"/> Go and visit someone who is sad, spend time with them, pray with them <input type="checkbox"/> Do things that make another person happy
 <p>forgive offenses willingly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Always be willing to forgive someone <input type="checkbox"/> Don't hold a grudge <input type="checkbox"/> Give people a second chance <input type="checkbox"/> Accept other's apologies with kindness
 <p>bear wrongs patiently</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Be patient when you trying to help someone and they don't want your help <input type="checkbox"/> Don't help people expecting a thank you <input type="checkbox"/> Be kind to people who make mistakes <input type="checkbox"/> Let people learn from their mistakes <input type="checkbox"/> Don't be mean back
 <p>pray for the living and the dead</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pray with people who are going through hard times <input type="checkbox"/> Ask your friends how you can pray for them <input type="checkbox"/> Memorize the "Eternal rest" prayer and pray it for those who have died <input type="checkbox"/> Pray when you drive past a cemetery <input type="checkbox"/> Pray a Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Mass, Holy Hour for a specific person <input type="checkbox"/> Remember especially: soldiers, those who are sick or dying, pope, bishops, priests, deacons, and babies who are in danger of abortion