

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.” (United States Catholic Catechism for Adults). They respond to the basic needs of humanity as we journey together through this life.

- 1. To Feed the Hungry** There are many people in this world that go without food. When so much of our food goes to waste, consider how good stewardship practices of your own food habits can benefit others who do not have those same resources.
- 2. To Give drink to the Thirsty** Many of our brothers and sisters in Christ do not have access to clean water and suffer from the lack of this basic necessity. We should support the efforts of those working towards greater accessibility of this essential resource.
- 3. To Clothe the Naked/Give alms to the poor** Donate to organizations that have the ability to provide support and services to those in need. Do research and find the organizations that put people in need first, rather than profit.
- 4. To Visit the Imprisoned** 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 Truth in the message of Christ.
- 5. To Shelter the Homeless** There are many circumstances that could lead to someone becoming a person without a home. Christ encourages us to go out and meet those without homes, affirming their worth and helping them seek a resolution to the challenges they face.
- 6. To Visit the Sick** Those who are sick are often forgotten or avoided. In spite of their illness, these individuals often have much to offer to those who take the time to visit and comfort them.
- 7. To Bury the Dead** Funerals give us the opportunity to grieve and show others support during difficult times. Through our prayers and actions during these times we show our respect for life, which is always a gift from God, and comfort to those who mourn.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

The USCCB gives “suggestions and words of advice” for living out each one of the Corporal Works of Mercy “in our daily lives.” To find them, do a search for Corporal Works of Mercy and scroll down to the USCCB link.

Spiritual Works of Mercy

The Spiritual Works of Mercy have long been a part of 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.” (United States Catholic Catechism for Adults)

- 1. To Advise the Sinner** Do not judge, but be supportive in helping others find their way and correct their mistakes. Together we can learn to walk more closely with Christ.

- 2. To Instruct the Ignorant** Learn about our faith and be open to talking with others about our beliefs. There is always something more to discover about our faith.

- 3. To Counsel the Doubtful** Everyone has moments of doubt about their faith journey. Nevertheless, we should always remember that Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life and turn to him along our way.

- 4. To Comfort the Sorrowful** Be open to listening and comforting those who are dealing with grief. Even if we aren’t sure of the right words to say, our presence can make a difference.

- 5. To Bear wrongs Patiently** 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.

- 6. To Forgive all Injuries** 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.

- 7. To Pray for the Living and the Dead** 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 into God’s care.

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