

CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY LESSON 2/5/23

Introduction into Mercy

- What is Mercy

The disposition to be kind and forgiving. Founded on compassion, mercy differs from compassion or the feeling of sympathy in putting this feeling into **practice** with a readiness to assist. It is therefore the ready willingness to help anyone in need, especially in need of pardon or reconciliation.

What does really mean? The key words in this definition are **SYMPATHY into PRACTICE**. Our opening scripture read “faith w/o works is dead”. Meaning that if we don’t **DO something (take action)**, we don’t have real faith. Mercy is ignoring that human impulse that wants to look the other way when we see suffering and ignore it, go about our daily routine-

A few yrs ago Pope Francis declared it the **Year Of Mercy**. He was reminding us that when we see someone hungry, sad, hurt, lonely, sick, suffering, **we are seeing Jesus**. Mother Theresa was once asked where she got the strength to care for the dying, starving, sick and homeless people whom she encountered every day. “I begin each day by going to Mass and receiving Jesus in Holy Communion. Then I go out into the streets and **find the same Jesus hidden in the dying people**, the sick, abandoned babies, in people w AIDS, in the homeless and in the hungry. It is the same Jesus.” She said. *So mercy flows from the Eucharist. It helps to direct us toward the good of others; and enables us to **reflect and imitate Christ**.*

Mercy is developing a lifestyle of **charity** (love) towards others. This is where our faith is really tested. Do we go to Mass and claim to be Christian but don’t treat others w/ a Christian attitude? “Regardless of how loudly and often you profess the creed, follow the rules the bottom line is that if you haven’t brought comfort and mercy to the poor and vulnerable, if you haven’t tended the sick and welcome the outcast then the gospel has not yet come to life in YOU.” **The Gospel or Jesus’ message comes to life when we put our hands, feet and heart to work. How we treat others is how we treat GOD.**

We are all sinful. None of us deserves to go to Heaven. However, God not only forgives us when we don’t deserve it, we haven’t earned it, but God actually came down to our level and became one of us. God became a human being. He did this so he could walk with us and eventually open the gates of Heaven and allow us in. THIS IS MERCY! **It is not judging** others for their mistakes, it is **forgiving** them, and mostly it is **walking** with them and doing whatever you can to alleviate suffering.

Being merciful IS being Christian and it can be hard. But instead of judging others, fearing others, not forgiving others, Jesus calls us to something greater.

How do we do this? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrljStx9RQY> fr mike Schmitz (5min)

- **WORKS OF MERCY**

The Works of Mercy are putting that concept to work. They flow from LOVE; they flow from recognizing that none of us deserves God's mercy and EVERYTHING we have is a gift from God. THUS we are called to share that w/ our bros and sisters who don't have.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zMNEWPXfcg0> works of mercy (2.3MIN)

CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY-

When early Christians were preparing to enter the church they needed to know a couple things: (10 commandments, Beatitudes & the Works of Mercy_) Because this is how we **live** our faith, we put our faith into action. The bible gives us **7 basic Corporal Works of Mercy**. Corporal means BODILY. So these are actions that show mercy **for the needs of our bodies**. **What are our basic needs for survival?** Water, then food, then shelter. So the corporal works of mercy are meeting our bodily needs.

1) Give drink to the thirsty

- a. our most basic physical need as a human being is water. Without water we die w/in 3 days. Here in the US we don't really have much of a concept of what it's like to be w/o drinkable water. Having clean water is really a right as a human being. Where recently has this been a problem nearby? Flint- the water is was poisoning and causing sickness and in some cases likely causing death. This is a tragedy yet most of the world has this as a regular problem. In developing countries, it's common to have parasites because the water is not clean.

2) Give food to the hungry

- a. Our second basic need as human beings is to EAT! Our bodies tell us numerous times throughout the day "feed me!". Food gives us energy and the ability to think, work, and live. When you eat crappy food all the time, you can tell. Again, most if not all of us are not experienced w/ what it's like to actually be hungry and not have the ability to get food. Even here in the states, it's very hard to starve to death. Even the homeless can find food thanks to the kitchens around most cities. Again, most of the world is not this fortunate. Responding to the need people have for food is a very basic way to show mercy. On the side of the road, someone at school, donating to a cause outside of the country.

3) Shelter the homeless

- a. Our 3rd basic need as human beings is shelter- a roof over our head, a place to sleep, a place to live. We cannot live satisfying, healthy lives w/o a place to live. So this call is to serve those w/ a home or to take in those w/o a home.

4) Clothe the naked

- a. As human being, being properly clothed is key to our dignity. Not having clothes or not have warm clothes or proper clothes for what we need takes away our ability to function in the world. If you have a job interview but only have torn old

clothes, you will likely not get the job. If you don't have clean or proper clothes you will not feel good about yourself and that hinders who God wants you to be.

5) Visit the sick

- a. One of the most vulnerable positions to be in in life is when you are sick. We've all been sick. Imagine being sick all the time. Or imagine being elderly and things just don't feel good, your body doesn't work like it used to and you just never feel GOOD. Being sick is depressing and it's hard and you want someone to know how you feel. You want someone there w/ you showing you that they care. That's why visiting those who are sick, injured or deathly ill is so important. It is love in practice.

6) Visit the imprisoned

- a. On that same note- scriptures talk a great deal about visiting prisoners. Why? Prisoners are forgotten, treated like animals and stripped of their dignity. If you have ever been inside a prison it is similar to going to a dog pound. It smells, there are cages. Did they do something wrong? Most likely. But just like we learned when we talked about mercy, we ALL do things wrong, but God has mercy and loves us anyways. We are still called to see them as human beings.

7) Bury the dead.

- a. This one seems confusing. Why is it important to bury the dead? They are dead? Well like we learned in TOB, as human persons, we are BODY AND SOUL. When we die our bodies still have value for the person we were. We profess in our creed that we believe in the resurrection of the body. So one day at the end of time we will be joined again body and soul. So the body, while it will decay into the ground is still of value and needs to be treated w respect. It's also important for the people who lost someone that they have a burial and proper time to mourn them.
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