



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
SAINT PETERSBURG
Courageously Living the Gospel

MERCY

FINDING HOPE THROUGH

MERCY



2025 Jubilee Year

1,000,000
Acts of Mercy
Challenge
Toolkit

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Finding Hope Through Mercy is an initiative of the Diocese of Saint Petersburg's 2025-2029 Pastoral Plan, "A Call to Conversion - Courageously Living the Gospel". For reference, in the Pastoral Plan, please see Goal 8, Call to Conversion 1, Putting it into Action 1 (on page 40).



INVITATION FROM BISHOP GREGORY L. PARKES

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we begin this Jubilee Year of Hope, I write to you with deep joy and a heart filled with gratitude. The Holy Father calls us, in this special year, to renew our faith in the power of hope. In the papal proclamation of the Jubilee Year, *Spes Non Confundit*, (Hope Does Not Disappoint), Pope Francis reminds us that hope is not a mere wish, but a living force rooted in God's unshakable promises. It is through hope that we come to experience the fullness of His mercy.

Christian hope, as the Holy Father so beautifully articulates, is not something that fades in the face of trials, but rather it is the light that shines brightest in the darkest moments. Hope does not deceive, and it does not disappoint. When we place our hope in Christ, we find the strength to persevere, knowing that Christ walks with us through every difficulty and suffering. It is this hope that leads us to be merciful to others, as we are first recipients of the boundless mercy of God. Through the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy, we put our hope into practice, offering tangible signs of God's love to the world in need. We are not simply performing acts of charity; we are participating in the hope that God has already given us. Each act is an expression of Christ's love, a beacon of His mercy, and a powerful reminder that we are called to be instruments of His love in the world.

We began this year with our new pastoral plan "A Call to Conversion: Courageously Living the Gospel." Our focus, our priorities for the next five years is to **place God first in all things, to love as God loves and serve as Christ serves, and to go and make disciples**. One of our first initiatives is a challenge! I challenge every one of us in the five counties that make up the Diocese of Saint Petersburg to together complete one million (1,000,000) Works of Mercy by Advent 2025. I am asking every parishioner, every parish, every school and every youth group to spend time throughout the year being merciful through

The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #2447, the Works of Mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his or her spiritual and bodily necessities. 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. 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.

Corporal Works of Mercy:

Feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead.

Spiritual Works of Mercy:

Teach others about God and the Faith, counsel the doubtful, encourage reconciliation with God and others, bear wrongs patiently, forgive offenses willingly, comfort the afflicted, pray for the living and the dead.

the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. These acts are accomplished by treating others with kindness and mercy within our families, workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, parishes and communities. I am asking every parish and school to provide formation to their parishioners and students in order to understand how to live out these Works of Mercy in daily life and then to set a goal of how many they, as a parish or school community, will undertake throughout the year (a minimum of 2,025 acts of mercy per parish or school). Invite others, perhaps those who haven't been to Church in a while, or those without a religious affiliation, to assist you. By doing so, **imagine the transformation that will take place in Pinellas, Hillsborough, Pasco, Hernando, and Citrus Counties if 1,000,000 acts of mercy were gifted to others.**

This toolkit provides possible ways your parish or school community can accomplish this massive goal. Its purpose is to help us start thinking of deeper ways we can share mercy. It includes formation suggestions to help your parishioners and students understand the breadth and depth of both the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. It includes bulletin, social media and webpage ideas as well as homily notes and small group facilitation on these Works of Mercy. It offers a planning guide to sponsor "Mercy Mornings" or "Days of Mercy" where you can invite parishioners and those in your mission field to accomplish these Works of Mercy (a great evangelization tool). Finally, as we work together to accomplish this vision of one

million acts of mercy, parishioners will be able to record their acts (and provide credit to their parish or school). We will be able to witness the progress we are doing together to bring hope to others. For those parishes, schools, and youth groups who go an extra mile, we will be awarding grant monies for pastoral care, outreach, and mission-trip related ministries to

those entities that exceed certain benchmarks. The grant details are explained within this toolkit.

This Jubilee Year of Hope invites us to engage more deeply in these Works of Mercy. May the Holy Spirit continue to strengthen us in our journey, that we may be true witnesses of hope and mercy. Let us pray that, through the grace of this Jubilee Year, we may live out, with renewed vigor and commitment, the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy in our homes, within our families, in our workplaces and schools, in our neighborhoods and parishes throughout the Diocese. As we are all called to conversion, may we reflect the boundless mercy of our Heavenly

Father as we serve as His instruments of hope.

Please join me in 2025, as we, together, carry out God's kingdom through a million acts of mercy!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Gregory L. Parkes

Most Reverend Gregory L. Parkes
Bishop of Saint Petersburg



01

OVERVIEW

Initiative to Spread Hope by Performing Works of Mercy.

In *Spes Non Confundit*, the Bull of Indiction (proclamation) for the Ordinary Jubilee of the Year 2025, Pope Francis wrote: “Works of mercy are also works of hope that give rise to immense gratitude. Care given to [those in particularly difficult situations, especially those affected by illnesses or disabilities that severely restrict their personal independence and freedom,] is a hymn to human dignity, a song of hope that calls for the choral participation of society as a whole.”

The experience of mercy, whether we are the ones giving it or the ones receiving it, leads to joy. This is because mercy opens our hearts to the hope of new life. As scripture reminds us, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3). Therefore, in this Year of Hope, we ask God not only for hope for ourselves, but also for the grace to become instruments of His hope for others.

As part of the celebrations around the Jubilee Year, through both the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy, we will make God’s mercy manifest in our communities. We will be tangible signs of hope for our brothers and sisters who experience hardships. The Works of Mercy are tangible and measurable; no act is too large or too small, especially when done with great love. Empowered by the message of the Gospel, we invite our community to take on the challenge of completing one million Works of Mercy in our Diocese.

This manual serves as a toolkit for implementing this initiative. It provides details on the programs events, partners, and communications that will help you meet - and exceed - this challenge. It also includes a special section to help form parishioners and others in deepening their understanding of the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.

Think of this challenge as a fun opportunity to engage with your friends, family, ministry, parish, school, and other groups around the Diocese. It also offers an evangelization aspect. Inviting those outside your parish to join you in these Works of Mercy, you can provide them with a glimpse of what it means to live as a Catholic.

Record your acts of mercy on the Diocesan website, www.Mercy2025.org. The webpage will list Diocesan entities along with total counts, as well as separate tallies for youth and adults for a fun grant opportunity. (See page 54 for details.)



02



PREPARATION

1,000,000 Acts of Mercy! How Do We Accomplish This Goal?

The goal of this diocesan-wide initiative is to foster a deeper appreciation, as well as greater engagement and participation in both the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.

1. GET STARTED

Form a Works of Mercy team. The team can include parish staff (clergy or lay) and key parish leaders. Once your team is in place, provide them with formation. Set aside time to meet, review the materials in this toolkit and study the Works of Mercy. After familiarizing yourself with the various steps and options for this initiative, work together to assign responsibilities or accountability to members of the team. (See *Leadership Responsibility Worksheet* on page 9.) This manual will help you encourage greater participation in performing Works of Mercy. The more you utilize the materials, the more opportunities you will create for people to engage and experience the hope that arises from mercy.

2. PICK THE DATES

Take advantage of times during the year when the liturgical readings for homilies, faith formation talks, small group discussions, or a homily series (a set of homilies focused on a particular message over a few weeks) might align with the theme of God's mercy. These times are great opportunities to provide formation and sponsor special mercy events. Review your calendar as a team to determine the best dates for your programs and events. Select dates to host your Mercy events (see page 28), special collections (see page 34), or any other related events. The challenge runs from January through December 2025.

Materials Included in This ToolKit

- **Timeline Overview for a Mercy Morning or Similar Event**
- **Leadership Responsibility Worksheet**
- **Sample Communication Texts and Graphic Assets**
- **Formation Materials:**
 - Homily Notes (*4 weeks covering the 7 corporal works plus an overview*)
 - List of readings that lend themselves to preaching the Works of Mercy
 - General Intercessions
 - Challenge for the Week
 - Small Group Study

A special toolkit on the Jubilee Years' Universal Reconciliation effort titled "24 Hours for the Lord" is provided under separate cover. It includes formation on this spiritual work of mercy and counts toward the Works of Mercy Challenge.

3. PLAN THE PROCESS/ENGAGEMENT

Develop a plan for engaging participants in performing Works of Mercy. Consider what materials you will need to produce for promoting this initiative, along with your events, formation opportunities, and other informational materials. Set deadlines and determine when to communicate the challenge to your participants. Schedule when to communicate the events and programs. This toolkit includes sample materials to assist in the planning and engagement process.

4. PREPARE THE MATERIALS

Begin to customize or produce the necessary materials. This may include bulletin announcements, newsletter articles, email messages (e.g., Flocknote), pulpit announcements, postcards or other mailings, homily series materials and homily notes, flyers, banners, paper forms (such as those to submit completed Works of Mercy for the challenge), social media posts, videos, and other promotional or informational materials. Sample materials are included with this toolkit. Additionally, a dedicated webpage for the challenge is recommended, where you can post information about the events, programs, and other resources. The Diocese will provide a link to an online form for submitting completed Works of Mercy. Please ensure there is a clear and easy way to access the link on your website. For more details, see the section titled *Making It Count, Counting Works of Mercy - Paper Form and Website* (see page 28).

5. PROMOTE THE PROGRAMS/EVENTS

Promote your Mercy events and special collections through various channels: bulletin, newsletter, your website, email, postal communications (postcards and other mailings), social media, flyers, banners or other signage, during Mass (slides, announcements, and homilies), the local newspaper, community calendars, radio (add your event to the *SpiritFM* Community Calendar). Always include the date, time, and location of the event or collection.

6. FORMATION/CATECHESIS

Utilize the materials provided to offer formation on the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy for the faithful. Utilize bulletin inserts, emails, website content, informational documents, videos, and homily materials to help your participants gain an awareness of or deepen their understanding of the Works of Mercy. Provide materials for participants to take home and reflect on in their personal prayer and contemplation.

The following will help us reach and exceed the challenge:

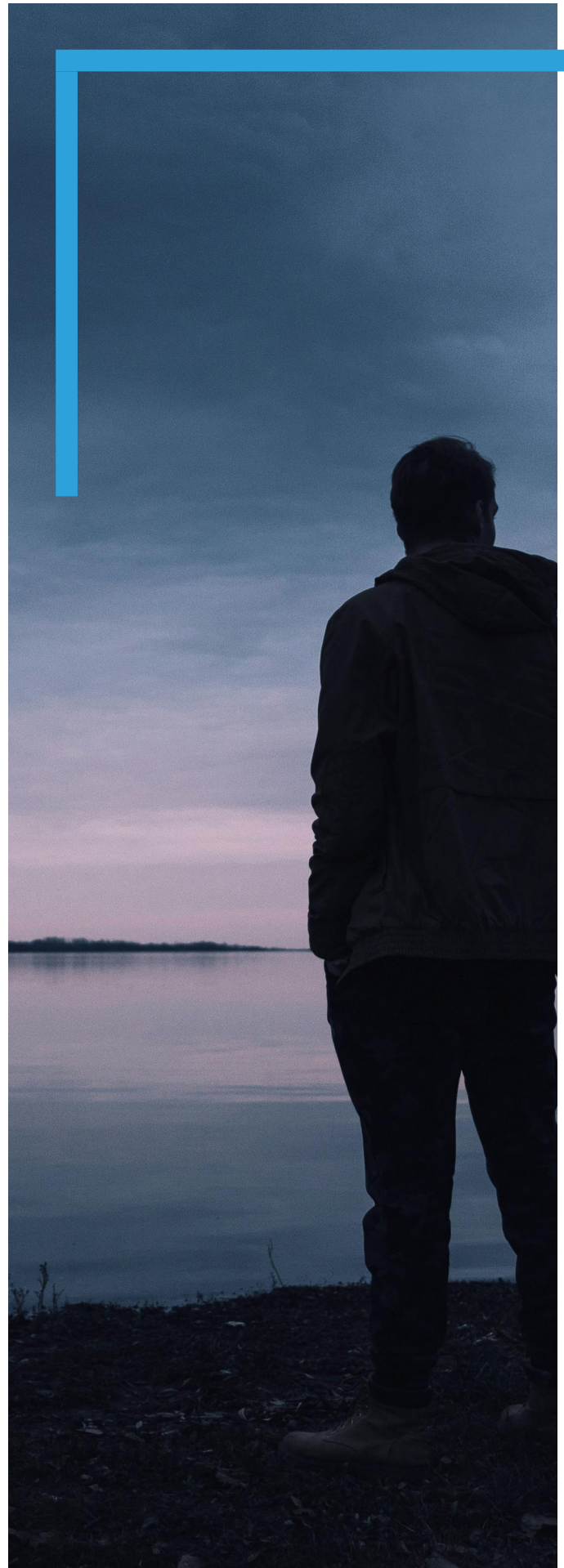
- Ministry Involvement
- Mercy Events
- Prayers
- Special Collections
- Community Partners
- Communicating the Message
- Formation on the Works of Mercy

7. HOST THE PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Coordinate with key leaders, such as pastors, priests, deacons, and principals to ensure they are available and informed of event times. Provide the necessary resources, including materials created in previous steps. To be counted, all acts of mercy must be entered on the official Works of Mercy website, www.Mercy2025.org. There are two ways to do this:

1. Individuals, parish or school representatives enter data about the acts of mercy directly on the website.
2. Parish or school representatives capture participant data about the acts of mercy on a paper form first, then enter the data on the website.

Assign greeters or staff to welcome participants as well as collect their forms as they leave. While some parishes may choose to use a “drop box” for form submissions, a person collecting at the doors tends to yield a better response rate.



PLANNING AID - LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITY WORKSHEET

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Team Leader: _____ Co-Leader: _____

Members of the Planning Team: _____

PRELIMINARY PLANNING

Event Type: Mercy Morning Days of Mercy Other Date(s) for Event: _____

Special Collections: Responsibility: _____

Type of Collection: _____

Date of Collection: _____

Type of Collection: _____

Date of Collection: _____

Type of Collection: _____

Date of Collection: _____

Place on MySpiritFM Community Calendar and the DOSP Calendar: Responsibility: _____

Invite priests, principals and any other leaders to attend: Responsibility: _____

Invite ministry and community partners to participate: Responsibility: _____

Event Stations: Responsibility: _____

Solicit Donations: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Procure Materials For Event: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Items that may be needed for your stations like tables, chairs, cards, paper, pens, baggies, paper bags, station signs, etc.

Recruit Volunteers: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Make Directional Signs: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

LITURGICAL AND FORMATIONAL CATECHESIS

The suggested homily series entitled “The Magnificent Seven”, which runs from August 1-31, 2025 aims to help people find hope through mercy by participating in the challenge and performing Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. It raises awareness of the works, shows how to carry them out, and reveals the tangible benefits of experiencing hope through God’s mercy, encouraging full engagement in the challenge.

Homily Series: Clergy Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Overall Title of the Series: _____

Readings: 1st weekend: _____

(First,
Second,
and Gospel)

2nd weekend: _____

3rd weekend: _____

4th weekend: _____

Homily Ideas:

(Each week’s
focus, aim for
three points
per weekend)

1st weekend: _____

2nd weekend: _____

3rd weekend: _____

4th weekend: _____

Call to Action:

(Challenge
of the week
leading up to
attending
the event)

Pre-weekend: _____ (optional)

1st weekend: _____

2nd weekend: _____

3rd weekend: _____

4th weekend: **ATTEND THE MERCY EVENT!**

General Intercessions: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Prepare one general intercession (prayer of the faithful) relating to the message for each week of the homily series. Sample “Intercessions of Mercy” can be found on page 40.

Liturgical Art/Environment: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Are there any specially created banners and/or decorative pieces to promote the message/theme?

Individuals to Supply Pews: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

When something is required at Mass or in the pews, who will coordinate this effort and when?

Music/Theme Song: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Who will select songs that reflect the message of Hope and God’s Mercy?

Videos/Mass Slides: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Are there any videos or Mass slides to help convey the message? Who will coordinate playing them?

Clergy Collaboration: Responsibility: _____

Initial Prep and Overview of Series: _____ (date)

1st weekend: _____ (date) 3rd weekend: _____ (date)

2nd weekend: _____ (date) 4th weekend: _____ (date)

Clergy Follow-up email with homily notes:

1st weekend: _____ (date) 3rd weekend: _____ (date)

2nd weekend: _____ (date) 4th weekend: _____ (date)

Who will preach?: 1st weekend: _____ (date) _____ (name)

2nd weekend: _____ (date) _____ (name)

3rd weekend: _____ (date) _____ (name)

4th weekend: _____ (date) _____ (name)

Pulpit Announcements: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Develop the end-of-Mass announcements to recap the Challenge/Call to Action and invite those to attend the following week's Mass/homily message.

Pre-weekend: _____

1st weekend: _____

2nd weekend: _____

3rd weekend: _____

4th weekend: _____

COMMUNICATIONS AND PROMOTIONS

General Graphics: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Images for Mass PowerPoint, homily series, website, bulletin, banners, signs and other social and print media, etc.

Banners/Signs: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Bulletin Materials: Responsibility: _____

Bulletin Cover(s): _____ Deadline Date: _____

Pastor's Column(s): _____ Deadline Date: _____

Bulletin Announcements: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Bulletin Inserts/Bulletin Column: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Social Media and Other Ads: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Parish Social Media: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Schedule when messages should go out, recommend at least twice a week to twice a day. Recap weekly homily message/ challenge and invite to attend the following week leading up to the Mercy event.

Parish Spiritual Email: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Schedule when messages should go out, recommended at least once a week. Recap weekly homily message/challenge and invite to attend the following week leading up to the Mercy event.

Post-Card: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

When will it be mailed? (Need approximately 4 weeks prep): _____ (date)

Target Audience: _____

SpiritFM Community Calendar: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Video: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Website Pages/Content: Responsibility: _____

Please link to the Diocesan webpage www.Mercy2025.org to facilitate the submission of Acts of Mercy challenge entities..

Index Page: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Main Challenge Page: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Homily Series Page: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Content Page(s): _____ Deadline Date: _____

Write-ups in Ministry Outlets: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

School: _____ (date)

Parish Religious Education Program: _____ (date)

Youth Ministry: _____ (date)

CATECHESIS

Ministries:

Ministries that can participate/benefit from the focus of the message and event:

Are there ministries that can lead parishioners to a deeper understanding of the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy? List those ministries and provide materials for their use:

Schools and Youth Ministries:

How can each grade level or subject area deepen the understanding of the message in a way that's suitable for their developmental stage?

School/subject/grade level: _____

Religious Education/topic/grade level: _____

Youth ministry/topic/grade level: _____

OCIA and Adult Ministries:

How can OCIA, Small Groups, etc., deepen the understanding of the message? _____

Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Questions/topic of week 1: _____

Questions/topic of week 2: _____

Questions/topic of week 3: _____

Questions/topic of week 4: _____

Videos: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Videos may enhance the small group process (can be the same as what was shown during the homily).

Prayer Opportunities: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Special Projects to Enhance Message: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

Other ideas to Catechize the Message: Responsibility: _____ Deadline Date: _____

FOLLOW-UP

Next meeting(s) (If Needed):

Date: _____ Time: _____ Place: _____


Date: _____ Time: _____ Place: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Place: _____

03

FORMATION & CATECHESIS

Prayers, Sample Homily Series, Readings, Faith Formation Questions and More.



**MERCY is the force that
reawakens us to new life and
instills in us the courage to
look to the future with HOPE.**

Pope Francis

Prayers

Excerpt From Pope Francis' Prayer for the Jubilee Year of Mercy

Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father,
and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him.
You are the visible face of the invisible Father,
of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy:
let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified.
You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness
in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error:
let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God.
Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing,
so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord,
and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor,
proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed,
and restore sight to the blind.
We ask this through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy,
you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.
Amen.

Prayer of Entrustment to Divine Mercy

O Lord, our God.
We place our trust in You,
Because you are mercy itself.
We repent of our sins and turn to You for mercy.
We trust You to provide for our every need, according to Your will.
Help us to forgive others as You forgive us.
We promise to be merciful by our deeds, words and prayers.
Though we have fears because of human weakness, we rely on Your infinite goodness and mercy.
We entrust to You the future of our planet, our Church, our nations, our families and all our needs.
With loud cries we implore your mercy on us and on the whole world.
Look upon us, created in your image and likeness.
Form us in the Heart of Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit into the living images of mercy.
May all come to know the depth of Your mercy and sing the praises of Your mercy forever.
Amen!

God's Mercy - Saint Catherine of Siena (1347-1380)

Merciful Lord, it does not surprise me that you forget completely the sins of those who repent. I am not surprised that you remain faithful to those who hate and revile you. The mercy which pours forth from you fills the whole world. It was by your mercy that we were created, and by your mercy that you re-deemed us by sending your Son. Your mercy is the light in which sinners find you and good people come back to you. Your mercy is everywhere, even in the depths of hell where you offer to forgive the tortured souls. Your justice is constantly tempered with mercy, so you refuse to punish us as we deserve. O mad Lover! It was not enough for you to take on our humanity; you had to die for us as well.
Amen.

Readings During Year C

The following readings lend themselves to formation on the Works of Mercy. For those who want to cover the Corporal Works of Mercy as a homily series, we have included suggested preaching notes, graphics, and other materials. Please visit www.dosp.org/Jubilee2025/MercyChallenge/Toolkit for a sortable Excel table with this information.

WORK OF MERCY	DATE	SUNDAY	READING	SYNOPSIS
All 7 Corporal	2/23	7th OT	Luke 6:27-38	Be Merciful as Your Father is Merciful
All 7 Corporal	5/18	5th Sunday of Easter	John 13:31-33a, 34-35	Love One Another as I Have Loved You
All 7 Corporal	7/6	14th OT	Luke 10:1-12, 17-20	Instructions to the 72
Feed The Hungry	2/9	5th OT	Luke 5:1-11	Jesus and Peter Go Out Into the Deep and Catch "Fish"
Feed The Hungry	2/16	6th OT	Luke 6:17, 20-26	Blessed Are You Who Are Now Hungry, For You Will Be Satisfied.
Feed The Hungry	5/4	3rd Sunday of Easter	John 21:1-19	Do You Love Me? Feed My Sheep
Feed The Hungry	6/22	Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ	Luke 9:11b-17	Feeding of the Five Thousand (5 Loaves and 2 Fish)
Feed The Hungry	7/20	16th OT	Genesis 18:1-10a / Luke 10:38-42	Abraham Extends Hospitality to 3 Visitors / Jesus Visits Mary and Martha, Mary Stays at Jesus' Side
Feed The Hungry	7/27	17th OT	Luke 11:1-13	Friend, Lend Me Three Loaves of Bread...
Give Drink to the Thirsty	7/20	16th OT	Luke 10:38-42	Jesus Visits Mary and Martha, Mary Stays at Jesus' Side
Give Drink to the Thirsty	9/25	26th OT	Luke 16:19-31	The Rich Man and Lazarus
Clothe the Naked	2/23	7th OT	Luke 6:27-38	From the Person Who Takes Your Cloak, Do Not Withhold Even Your Tunic
Shelter the Homeless	3/30	4th Sunday of Lent	Luke 15:1-3, 11-32	The Prodigal Son
Shelter the Homeless	5/25	6th Sunday of Easter	John 14:23-29	We Will Come to Him and Make our Dwelling with Him.
Shelter the Homeless	7/13	15th OT	Luke 10:25-37	The Good Samaritan
Visit the Sick	3/30	4th Sunday of Lent	Cycle A: John 9:1-41	The Man Born Blind
Visit the Sick	4/27	2nd Sunday of Easter/ Divine Mercy Sunday	Acts 5:12-16	The Sick and Those Disturbed by Unclean Spirits Are Cured.
Visit the Sick	7/13	15th OT	Luke 10:25-37	The Good Samaritan
Visit the Imprisoned	4/6	5th Sunday of Lent	John 8:1-11	The Woman Caught in Adultery
Visit the Imprisoned	5/18	5th Sunday of Easter	Revelation 21:1-5a	Behold, I Make All Things New.
Visit the Imprisoned	6/29	Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul	Acts 12:1-11	The Angel of the Lord Visits/Frees Peter from Prison
Bury the Dead	4/6	5th Sunday of Lent	Cycle A: John 11:1-45	The Resurrection of Lazarus
Bury the Dead	5/11	4th Sunday of Easter	John 10:27-30	I Give them Eternal Life, and They Shall Never Perish.

WORK OF MERCY	DATE	SUNDAY	READING	SYNOPSIS
All 7 Spiritual	4/13	Palm Sunday	Luke 22:14-23:56 or Luke 23:1-49	The Passion of Christ
All 7 Spiritual	5/18	5th Sunday of Easter	John 13:31-33a, 34-35	New Commandment
All 7 Spiritual	7/13	15th OT	Luke 10:25-37	The Parable of the Good Samaritan
Bear Wrongs Patiently	2/23	7th OT	Luke 6:27-38	Love Your Enemies
Bear Wrongs Patiently	11/23	Christ the King	Luke 23:35-43	The Crucifixion of Jesus
Comfort the Afflicted	4/6	Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	John 8:1-11 Cycle A: John 11:1-45	The Woman Caught in Adultery/ Rising of Lazarus
Council the Doubtful	6/22	Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ	Luke 9:11b-17	The Feeding of the Five Thousand
Council the Doubtful	9/14	Exaltation of the Holy Cross	John 3:13-17	The Son of Man Must Be Lifted Up
Encourage Reconciliation with God and Others	3/2	8th OT	Luke 6:39-45	The Blind Leading the Blind
Encourage Reconciliation with God and Others	10/5	27th OT	Luke 17:5-10	Faith as a Mustard Seed
Encourage Reconciliation with God and Others	10/26	30th OT	Luke 18:9-14	The Pharisee and the Tax Collector
Forgive Offenses Willingly	3/30	4th Sunday in Lent	Luke 15:1-3, 11-32	The Parable of the Prodigal Son
Forgive Offenses Willingly	4/6	5th Sunday of Lent	John 8:1-11	The Woman Caught in Adultery
Pray for the Living and Dead	4/27	Divine Mercy	John 20:19-31	Jesus Appears to the Disciples
Pray for the Living and Dead	6/1	7th Sunday of Easter	John 17:20-26	The Prayer of Jesus for His Disciples
Pray for the Living and Dead	7/27	17th OT	Luke 11:1-13	The Lord's Prayer and Teachings on Prayer
Pray for the Living and Dead	10/19	29th OT	Luke 18:1-8	The Parable of the Persistent Widow
Teach Others About God and the Faith	2/16	6th OT	Luke 6:17, 20-26	The Beatitudes and Woes
Teach Others About God and the Faith	3/25	Annunciation of the Lord	Luke 1:26-38	The Annunciation
Teach Others About God and the Faith	9/21	25th OT	Luke 16:1-13	The Parable of the Dishonest Steward
Teach Others About God and the Faith	9/28	26th OT	Luke 16:19-31	The Rich Man and Lazarus

PLEASE NOTE: Lent and Holy Week are ideal times of the year that lend themselves to promoting the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. The first three Sundays of Lent are not included (though there are several tie-ins) due to the Jubilee Year's 24 Hours for the Lord Initiative during that same timeframe. We have materials to promote the initiative as well as share formation regarding the Sacrament of Reconciliation (part of the Spiritual Works of Mercy).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” -1 Peter 1:3

4-part Formation Series

For clergy or parishes who wish to focus on the Corporal Works of Mercy as a series of homilies in the lead-up to their Mercy event, we've provided the following sample homily notes. The goal of this series is to inspire parishioners to embrace a life of mercy (Mt. 25) by incorporating acts of mercy into their daily lives, outside of formal ministry roles (although participation in such ministries is certainly encouraged).

Series Title: "The Magnificent Seven: The Corporal Works of Mercy"

Dates: August 2/3 through August 23/24

Week One - August 2-3

Title: We Are Family! – Introduction to Seven and feed the hungry

Week Two - Aug 9-10

Title: A Father's Promise - Visit the imprisoned and clothe the naked

Week Three - Aug 16-17

Title: I've got your back! - Give drink to the thirsty and shelter the homeless

Week Four - Aug 23-24 (leading to the Mercy event on 8/31)

Title: Wake Up to Mercy! - Visit the sick and bury the dead

A NOTE OF APPRECIATION

Father Michael Burke, JCL of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Menevia, Wales, United Kingdom, provided these preaching notes for the Corporal Works of Mercy Formation Series.



Preaching Notes

Week One (August 2/3)

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Focus: Introduction to the Corporal Works of Mercy and Feed the Hungry

1st Reading: Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:21-23
Life's struggles are often felt to be in vain.

2nd Reading: Colossians 3:1-5, 9-11
Heavenly life calls for a heavenly attitude.

Gospel: Luke: 12:13-21
Wealth, selfishly desired, only leads to woe; true wisdom means that wealth requires concern for others.

Synopsis of the movie, *The Magnificent Seven*

"When their small village is once again attacked by a gang of bandits, the village leaders decide to fight back. They send three villagers carrying their few objects of value to try and barter for weapons. In a town just inside the United States, the villagers find Chris, a veteran Cajun gunslinger, and ask for his help. He soon recruits six other gunfighters. Together, they develop a plan to secure the town and defend it against the next attack. During that time, each of the gunmen finds himself befriending the villagers. When they realize that the small meal made for them by the women consists of all the food in the village, the gunmen share it with the villagers. Friendships are formed and love blossoms between one of the men (Chico) and a local girl (Petra). Another (Bernardo) bonds with three of the village's boys.

Yet another (Lee), struggling with nightmares and fearing the loss of his skills, is comforted by the residents. Not all of them will survive the final attack. In the end, the three remaining gunmen help to bury the dead. However, it is the theme music that is the most memorable part of the movie. By introducing each homily with this music, there should be a link over the four weeks of the message series.

The **Corporal Works of Mercy** (cf. Mt. 25: 31-46) can each be seen in the ordinary way of life of the Mexican villagers (in between the gun fights). For example, feeding the hungry (at the cost of food for the villagers themselves), burying the dead, etc.

Homily Points

What does it mean to be merciful? The Corporal Works of Mercy form the traditional list of ways in which we act as disciples of Christ. Some critique it as being a bit out of date, but is it really? This list challenges us to discern new ways that our Savior is calling us to follow him, both personally, as a disciple of the 21st century, and also in the wider social dimension, as Church. The Corporal Works of Mercy illustrate that mercy means treating others in a way that allows them to see their worth in God's eyes. St. Teresa of Calcutta promoted the idea that every person could achieve great heights of holiness and sanctity by doing small acts with great love. This provides the perfect opportunity to make the Church relevant by following God's call to extend mercy to the lost and broken. (A side note, the stripes in the banners represent the three stripes of religious habit of the Missionaries of Charity, the order founded by Mother Teresa, the Patron Saint of Mercy.)

We are all God's children and baptism enables us to be prophets, priests, and royals or kings. The Works of Mercy remind us of this. We clothe the naked because every child of God deserves to be dressed in a manner that reveals their dignity as a son or daughter of the King! We feed the hungry because every person deserves a place at the King's table! We forgive willingly and bear wrongs patiently (Spiritual Works of Mercy) because we recognize it's hard to become a saint, so we try to be generous with each other's struggles. And yet, when those we love forget

their godly dignity we admonish the sinner – not to condemn or judge them, but to invite them to remember that they were meant to be more. The wars and the bloodshed of history, like all human troubles (cf. *The Magnificent Seven*), are rooted in greed and desire for power. Human division is the only result. Jesus warns us about the toxic dangers of greed. He tells a story about a rich farmer who was a fool. Our security is found in relationships, not in real estate. Self-giving is the only form of real life insurance. Life should mean celebration, not just getting by, eking out a living, playing it safe.

Pope Benedict XVI has written that feeding the hungry is an ethical imperative for the universal Church, and he observes: "Hunger is not so much dependent on lack of material things as on a shortage of social resources" (*Caritas in veritate*, 27). It is a tragedy that people go hungry in our world, but it is a scandal that they do so because the abundant goods of this world are not shared.

Challenge

When we put real thought into preparing healthy, tasty meals for our families, we create a nurturing space for communion and conversation. Years of research reveals the benefits of sitting down to meals together. Add "growing in holiness" to the list!

This work of mercy can also be carried out in other circumstances. People who are experiencing stress or grief may not have the energy to cook. Bringing meals to a neighbor at a difficult time, such as after a stay in the hospital or at the death of a loved one, is a small but effective act of charity. The elderly shut-in or resident in a home would appreciate an occasional special treat or luncheon out. A good meal – especially when accompanied by a warm heart and a generous ear – nourishes the spirit as well as the body.

In the context of this work, we might also revisit the practices of fasting and abstinence, which seem to have all but disappeared from Catholic life. By foregoing a meal, we can curb our own appetite (a healthy thing for us!) and use the resources to help someone who needs a meal.

Week Two (August 9/10)
19th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Focus: Visit the Imprisoned and
Clothe the Naked

1st Reading: Wisdom 18:6-9
The people prepare to be
liberated by the Lord from
their oppressors in Egypt.

2nd Reading: Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19
Abraham and Sarah placed
their trust in God's promises.

Gospel: Luke: 12:32-48
All are warned to stand ready
for the Lord's return.

experienced this condition, thereby making the prison cell sacred ground. His good news is meant for all people regardless of their circumstances. We can expand this work of mercy to embrace those who are imprisoned by the circumstances of life. The elderly shut-ins in our parishes, the residents of homes for the aged, and those who are trapped in addictions of various kinds are incarcerated in different ways. Their isolation is less dramatic than if they were literally in prison, but they are in their own prison and for that very reason they are deserving of our care. And, because they live in our neighborhoods and may be members of our own family, we have easy access to them.

Clothing provides for two basic human needs: protection and dignity. We probably do not see people very often who are literally shivering in the cold, but many poor and homeless people rely on charitable organizations for their clothing. One very direct way to carry out this work of mercy is to go through our own closets a couple of times a year and donate some of the clothing crammed into our closets. Better yet, perhaps we could develop the habit when shopping to buy some new clothing to give away – if you were in the position of someone who had to go to a thrift shop, wouldn't it be a treat to find something new there?

There is a social dimension to this work, too: often our "bargains" are paid for by the sweat of people working in inhumane conditions here and abroad. We have a moral responsibility to take a peek behind the stylish logo of popular clothing and shoes and if we find that the item has been produced at the cost of the human dignity of those who made it, we should boycott that product and let the manufacturer know why.

This work of mercy also challenges us to confront the crime of sexual exploitation in our society, and in particular the plague of pornography. This multi-billion dollar industry is founded on the odious act of stripping men, women, and even children of their basic human dignity. If it is a virtue to clothe the naked, it is a sin to strip the clothed.

Recap

Last week we had a general introduction to the Church's "Magnificent Seven: The Corporal Works of Mercy", and we looked at "Feeding the Hungry". This week we look at "Visit the Imprisoned" and "Clothe the Naked".

Homily Points

The migration of people across the world demonstrates the universal longing for a secure and lasting homeland. However, there is no permanent dwelling on earth. That homeland to which we journey – God's kingdom – is offered to us by the Lord, if we place our trust in God's promises. We are to make ourselves ready for that kingdom through a sense of solidarity, community and service. We need to be willing to move into an unknown future by trusting in God. These are the only entry requirements for the kingdom. The kingdom is to come, and we have to seek to build it.

Society has good reasons to keep some people incarcerated, but they too have a claim on our mercy. When we might be tempted to withhold our care from them, it would be good to recall how many saints have spent time in jail. Jesus himself



Challenge

If we give our children a time-out when they have committed an offense, visit them a few minutes later - talk them through their error, teach them what to do instead, and work to rebuild the relationship. Show them they still have worth and dignity even when they mess up.

Helping an elderly person put on their socks, finding the grace to be patient while dealing with a toddler who only wants to wear the blue shirt, or helping a teen dress attractively, yet modestly, are opportunities to help your elders and children remember their worth in God's eyes!

Week Three (August 16/17)
20th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Focus: Give Drink to the Thirsty and Shelter the Homeless

1st Reading: Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10
Jeremiah's life is saved because someone pleads with the king on his behalf.

2nd Reading: Hebrews 12:1-4
We have already started out on the journey towards Jesus; let us not lose sight of him.

Gospel: Luke: 12:49-53
Jesus, the Prince of Peace, declares that even families will be divided in their willingness to follow him.

Recap

Two weeks ago, we had a general introduction to the Church's "Magnificent Seven: The Corporal Works of Mercy", and we looked at "Feeding the Hungry". Last week we looked at "Visit the Imprisoned" and "Clothe the Naked". This week we will examine "Give Drink to the Thirsty" and "Shelter the Homeless".

Homily Points

Jesus came to bring division rather than peace. Religious belief can be divisive even within the family. Jesus recognized that the Gospel would sometimes lead to discord, but, little by little, our efforts to speak to each other are making a world of difference.

"I thirst!" This cry of the dying Christ is on the parched lips of millions of people in our world today. Half a million people die every year from polluted water, and two out of six people still must carry home the water they use. Pope Francis comments on this crisis in his encyclical: "Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to life consistent with their inalienable dignity" (Laudato Si, 30).

When speaking of receiving his followers, Our Lord says: "Whoever gives to these little ones even a cup of cold water because they are disciples, truly, I say to you, shall not lose their reward" (Mt. 10:42). Two comments might be in order here. Firstly, Christ's attention to detail – specifying cold water – holds a lesson for us: our sharing should be considerate. Jesus offers a model of "courtesy" that celebrates the dignity and standing of the other person. Time and again we see him exercising this thoughtfulness when healing the sick. Secondly, his instruction underscores how important even little acts of charity are; none of them, however slight, is missed by our loving God (cf. St. Teresa of Calcutta – week 1 of the series).

"The Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head" (Mt. 8:20). Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, was born in a borrowed manger, had no fixed address once he began his public ministry, and was buried in another man's grave. It is quite an irony: He who made the universe became a homeless person.

The media makes us aware of the plight of millions of refugees driven from their homes by war, but homelessness is literally also right on our doorstep. Because the problem is perennial, there is a danger that, like the rich man in the parable, we no longer see the Lazarus we practically have to step over. Even as we grapple as a society and Church with

the overarching challenge of homelessness, there still are those poor individuals we encounter every day who, like the Son of Man, have nowhere to lay their head. Some of them suffer from serious mental illness and are beyond the help of any but those with professional training. But a kind word, and some spare change, can brighten their day. As with the other Works of Mercy, sheltering the homeless requires discernment and the stewardship of our resources. Yet when in doubt, it is better to err on the side of charity.

Challenge

What parent hasn't been asked to get a thirsty child a drink in the middle of the night? Serving that child cheerfully with compassion is a work of mercy that reminds the child that he or she will be heard and loved even when it is inconvenient for us to do so.

Working to make your house a beautiful, orderly, welcoming, and a hospitable home is a great way to remind your family of their dignity as children of God.

Week Four (August 23/24)
21st Sunday in Ordinary Time
Focus: Visit the Sick and Bury the Dead

1st Reading: Isaiah 66:18-21
The Lord is coming to gather all the nations in Jerusalem at the Temple with their offerings.

2nd Reading: Hebrews 12:5-7, 11-13
Membership of the Christian family includes training, which can be difficult, but bears fruit in peace and goodness.

Gospel: Luke: 13:22-30
Jesus teaches those who follow him to enter by the narrow gate; their actions will mark them out when they are chosen to feast in the kingdom.

Recap

We started our Homily Series with a general introduction to the Church's "Magnificent Seven: The Corporal Works of Mercy", and then we looked at "Feeding the Hungry", "Visit the Imprisoned" and "Clothe the Naked". Last week we examined "Give Drink to the Thirsty" and "Shelter the Homeless". So this week, we round off "The Magnificent Seven" with "Visit the Sick" and "Bury the Dead".

Homily Points

God wishes to gather the nations in Jerusalem. Those who stand corrected by God nevertheless remain his sons and daughters. Jesus preaches time and time again about repentance. The disciple of Jesus is loyal to him and his teachings. While this may narrow earthly choices, it enables the true disciple to pass through the narrow door into the sheer generosity of the Kingdom.

The parable of the Good Samaritan is so powerful that the very term has passed into our language. Jesus tells us that when the Samaritan found the man who had been assaulted, he bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine, then brought him to a place where he could recover (Luke 10:34).

One of the glories of our Catholic tradition is the many institutions founded over the centuries to care for the sick. Heroic women and men have dedicated their entire lives to caring for the sick and elderly, and it may be that God is calling you to such a vocation. That is not the path for most of us, but we all should be concerned about health care in our nation. Yet St. John Paul II reminds us that institutional solutions are not enough. As he recovered from the attempt on his life, the Pope wrote, "The institutions are very important and indispensable; nevertheless, no institution can by itself replace the human heart, human compassion, human love or human initiative, when it is a question of dealing with the sufferings of another" (Salvifici Doloris, 29).

Visiting the sick is a work of mercy that calls for special discernment. Illness isolates people, and visits and cards remind them that they are not

alone. But we must also be sensitive to individual needs: some people prefer privacy when they are unwell. We need to be humble enough to ask those who are sick what help they want, rather than assuming that we know already. On the other hand, we may find that we are not making that visit to the hospital because we are uncomfortable with the fact that seeing someone we love who is ill reminds us of our own mortality. We should pray for our loved ones who are sick, and also pray for the light of the Holy Spirit to know how best to serve their needs, not our own. We should also be mindful of the situation of people, often our neighbors, who have no friends or family at hand.

Bury the Dead. This work is inspired by the Old Testament figure Tobit, who buried the dead at the risk of his own life. In one sense, this is a work of mercy we perform without thinking: when someone we know dies, we want to pay our respects by visiting the funeral home or attending their funeral.

But this work of mercy also challenges us to reflect on the Christian understanding of death, and thus how we bury the dead. In the Creed we profess that we believe in the resurrection of the body, and that fundamental truth shapes our rich Catholic tradition of funeral rites. They speak eloquently of the pain of loss, faith in the Resurrection, the hope of eternal life mingled with prayers to assist the departed on their final journey, and the sacramental life which plunges us, body and soul, into the death and resurrection of Christ.

There are practical ways of carrying out this particular work. Many parishes provide meals after the funeral service, grief counseling, and other services that provide opportunities for us to help bury the dead. Funerals can be very expensive (although they need not be), and our communities can set up funds to help those who cannot meet those expenses with their own resources. We can arrange to have Masses celebrated for the repose of the souls of those who have died, and if our schedule permits occasionally attend funerals in our parish even when the person is not known to us.

We also need to be aware of those who are grieving, who are struggling to “bury their dead” emotionally. Shedding tears at a funeral rarely completes grief.

We need to help one another to truly bury our lost loved ones by letting go of them, entrusting them to the hands of our merciful Creator and Savior.

Challenge

When you visit an assisted living facility and help residents connect with loved ones, or when you respond to a sick child lovingly, even though your schedule has been thrown into chaos, you are growing in compassion and showing your child his or her worth in God’s eyes and yours.

Honor the dead by going to cemeteries and arranging flowers, cleaning grave markers, or picking up trash. Helping a child deal with the loss of a pet, or face the death of a beloved relative requires incredible compassion and sensitivity—especially when dealing with our own grief. Doing this well enables our children to connect with God’s loving presence, even in times of sadness.

Closing Challenge

God calls us not just to “change” the world, but to “restore” it. We Catholics have a longstanding tradition for restoring the world around us – they are called the Corporal Works of Mercy. But for mercy to become dynamic, it must become specific, that is rooted in real person-to-person relationships. Practicing Christian Mercy becomes the path for discipleship.

In this Year of Hope, our homes can become saint-making machines if we allow the corporal works to reveal the spiritual power of everyday life!

We need 1,000,000 Corporal Works of Mercy. Join us next Sunday for Mercy Morning.



Intercession Samples



- That we will be willingly conformed to Christ and become an instrument of His Mercy for others. **Lord Christ our Hope, hear our prayer. R./ Christ our Hope**
- That our efforts to answer Christ's great commission to make disciples will be made fruitful through His mercy.
- That like Mary, Mother of Mercy, we may be obedient instruments of the Holy Spirit and bring the Lord's mercy to those who wait for it.
- That through the mystery of the Trinity we may receive the grace and mercy we need to sustain us in our work to spread the kingdom of God.
- That through the intercession of Mary, all may receive the graces of the Jubilee Year and experience God's Mercy, and through it, Hope.
- That our understanding of the merciful graces offered to us in the body and blood of Christ will continue to grow and enable us to work towards living in imitation of Jesus' life and work.
- That we may be receptive to the abundant love and mercy flowing from the heart of Jesus.
- That the strength of the risen Lord, who supports us on our pilgrim way, will sustain us and help us become an example of His mercy and inspiration to others.
- For the faithful departed, especially those who have no one to pray for them, that their souls, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
- Christ you are the source of our hope. Enliven us through our acts of mercy, that we may bring hope to others.
- Spirit of hope, be with all who minister in your name, that they may be beacons of hope for all whom they serve.
- That all who promote mercy and hope may themselves be blessed with those gifts. Let us pray that our lives and service will radiate Christ's own joy, peace, and hope.

Questions For Use with the Series

The following questions can be used for Small Groups, OCIA, or other ministries that wish to meet weekly to further discuss the readings and homily message.

WEEK ONE

Aug 2/3 - Introduction and Feed the Hungry

01 What does it mean to be merciful?

Possible response: The Corporal Works of Mercy illustrate that mercy means treating others in a way that allows them to see their worth in God's eyes.

02 Why do we do the Works of Mercy?

Possible response: Because we are all God's children, we treat each other with dignity. Baptism enables us to be prophets, priests, and royals. The Works of Mercy remind us of this.

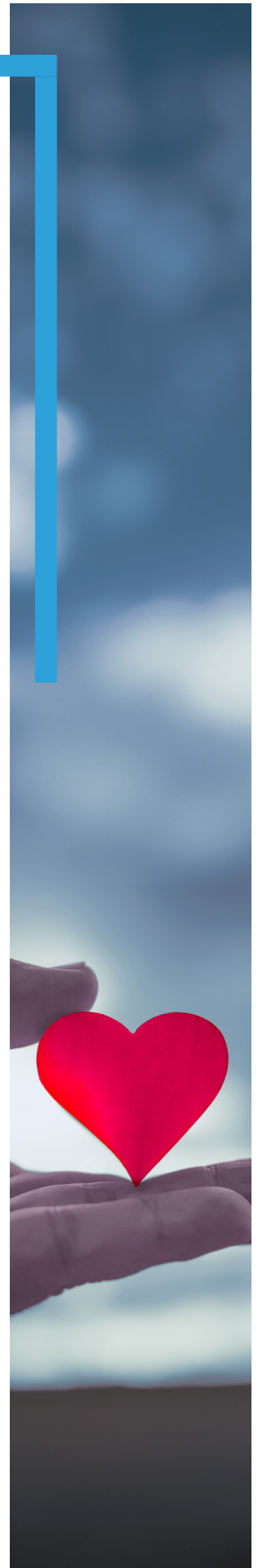
- We clothe the naked because every child of God deserves to be dressed in a manner that reveals their dignity as a son or daughter of the King!
- We feed the hungry because every person deserves a place at the King's table!
- We forgive willingly and bear wrongs patiently (Spiritual Works of Mercy) because we recognize it's hard to become a saint, so we try to be generous with each other's struggles.
- And yet, when those we love forget their godly dignity we admonish the sinner – not condemn or judge them, but invite them to remember that they were meant to be more. We encourage reconciliation between them and God and them and others.

03 How can we feed the hungry this week?

Possible response: People who are experiencing stress or grief may not have the energy to cook. Bringing meals to a neighbor at a difficult time, such as after a stay in the hospital or at the death of a loved one, is a small but effective act of charity. The elderly shut-in or resident in a home would appreciate an occasional special treat or luncheon out.

04 How can refraining from eating, fasting and abstaining, help you fulfill this corporal work of mercy?

Possible response: By foregoing a meal, we can curb our own appetite and use the resources to help someone who needs a meal.



WEEK TWO

Aug 9/10 – Visit the Imprisoned and Clothe the Naked

01 Who do I know that is in prison?...what kind of prison? physical or non-physical?

Possible response: trapped in addiction, isolation, discouragement, rejection by loved ones, or loss of job

02 Jesus' Good News is meant for all people regardless of their circumstances. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see those who are "imprisoned" around you. How can I visit the imprisoned this week and bring them the Good News?

Possible response:

- Spend time with those undergoing hardships.
- Give your undivided attention to someone who needs to be heard.
- Remind them that Jesus is with them in the difficulty, not far away. He loves them deeply no matter what.
- Share a Bible verse that may help them persevere through difficulty.
 - *Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.* (James 1:2)
 - *Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.* (Galatians 6:9)
 - *I have set the LORD continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.* (Psalm 16:8)
 - *I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown.* (Revelation 3:11)

03 Clothes give value and dignity to our bodies. What is one thing I can do to remind myself or someone else of their dignity through clothing?

Possible response:

- Compliment family/friends/youth when they wear something that is attractive yet modest.
- Look for clothes for yourself that reveals your dignity as child of God.
- Be patient with toddlers when they want to wear one article of clothing rather than another.
- Let go of pornography that strips away the dignity of others.

04 One very direct way to carry out this work of mercy is to go through our own closets a couple of times a year and donate clothes. When can I do this?

Possible response: Participate in the Christ in the City diocesan mission in Tampa (May 18, 2025 to June 8, 2025). Contact: ChristInTheCity@dosp.org.

WEEK THREE

Aug 16/17 – Give Drink to the Thirsty and Shelter the Homeless

01 Jesus came to bring division rather than peace. Religious belief can be divisive even within the family. Have you experienced this? How have you dealt with this?

Possible response: Yes, I have experienced division in my family, I've learned to approach these

situations with patience and respect, focusing on listening more than arguing. I also pray for understanding and guidance, asking God to help us find common ground despite our differences.

02 When have you served someone that was an inconvenience to you? How can we approach those moments differently knowing that we are serving Jesus at that moment?

Possible response: When I was tired but helped a neighbor with their groceries, In those moments, I can choose to see the person not as an inconvenience, but as an opportunity to serve Jesus, who was always willing to serve others even when it was difficult. I can approach these moments with a mindset of selflessness, remembering that in serving others, I am serving Christ.

03 Working to make your house a beautiful, orderly, welcoming, and hospitable home is a great way to remind your family of their dignity as children of God. What is one thing we can do around the house to help us and our family reach this goal?

Possible response: One simple way we can improve our home environment is by creating a family prayer space, a place where we gather together to pray and reflect on God's presence. This not only enhances the beauty of our home, but also serves as a reminder of the dignity of each family member.

WEEK FOUR

Aug 23/24 – Visit the Sick and Bury the Dead

01 Illness isolates people, and visits and cards remind them that they are not alone. Who is sick that I can pray for, visit or call?

Possible response: I can pray for my friend who has been struggling with a long-term illness. I'll call her to let her know I'm thinking of her, and I might bring her some flowers or a small gift to brighten her day. I can also volunteer at an assisted living facility.

02 When you respond to a sick child lovingly, refusing to treat him or her as a burden or an inconvenience even though your schedule has been thrown into chaos, you are growing in compassion and showing your child his or her worth in God's eyes and yours. Whom can I visit and show this loving compassion?

Possible response: I can visit my neighbor's child who is recovering from surgery. I'll spend time with them, listen to their feelings, and make them feel special during this challenging time.

03 Helping someone deal with the loss of a pet, or face the death of a beloved relative requires incredible compassion and sensitivity—especially when we are dealing with our own grief. Doing this well enables others to connect with God's loving presence even in times of sadness. To whom can I share the Christian view of death?

Possible response: I can share the Christian view of death with a friend who recently lost a beloved relative. I can remind them that death is not the end, and that their loved one is with God now. I'll offer prayers for peace and healing in this difficult time.

04

MAKING IT COUNT

Counting Works of Mercy – Paper Form and Website.

To facilitate the process of counting acts of mercy, the Diocese provides an electronic form on its website www.Mercy2025.org. Please ensure there is an easily accessible link from your own website to this form, making it convenient for your participants to submit their Works of Mercy. On the Diocesan website, along with the form, you will find a list of participating entities, displaying their total count as well as separate tallies for adults and youths.

In addition to the online form, please provide paper forms and collection box(es) at any of your events (special collections, Mercy events, etc.) as well as making them available in central locations like your office reception, church entrance, or welcome desk. This will make it easier for participants to record their works. The paper forms can then be entered into the online form. Designate someone to collect the paper forms and enter the data into the Diocesan website form. Section 10 of this toolkit details the special grants available for parishes, schools, and youth groups.

DO GOOD - MAKE IT COUNT! Complete acts of mercy - enter them at www.Mercy2025.org or turn in this form.

Optional Information
Name: _____
Email: _____
(Include to have a confirmation emailed to you.)

Date of Service: _____ I am a: Adult (19 and older) Youth (18 and younger)

Entity: _____
(Parish, school, or diocesan entity whom I want my act(s) to count towards.)

CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY:
 Feed the Hungry
 Give Drink to the Thirsty
 Clothe the Naked
 Shelter the Homeless
 Visit the Imprisoned
 Visit the Sick
 Bury the Dead

SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY:
 Counsel the Doubtful
 Teach About God and the Faith
 Forgive Offenses Willingly
 Bear Wrongs Patiently
 Encourage Reconciliation
 Comfort the Afflicted
 Pray for the Living and the Dead

Enter the number of times you have completed the work(s) of mercy.

MERCY
FINDING HOPE THROUGH
1,000,000 Acts of Mercy Challenge

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Give Hope With Every Donation.

Special collections can be held independently, in partnership with ministries or local service organizations, or in preparation for a Mercy event. Everyone involved in the collection - whether giving, collecting, or distributing - participates in an act of mercy. Once you have determined the focus of your collection, decide what items you want to gather - food, toiletries, baby items, clothing, etc. For a list of potential community partners for your collection, refer to the section *Example Partner Community Organizations*. For additional details on hosting a Mercy event, see the section *Host a Mercy Event*.

Example Collection

A toiletries Collection, in preparation for a Mercy event.
(Items will be packaged into care bags for the homeless at the event.)

Last Name Begins With:	Suggested Items To Donate:
A - I	oral care (toothpaste and toothbrush)
J - R	hair care (shampoo, conditioner, comb)
S - Z	hygiene items (soap, body wash, shaving cream)

Other Example Collections

PERSONAL CARE

lotion, hand sanitizer, lip balm, "Kleenex" tissue

CLOTHING

socks (sizes for men and women), long-sleeve shirts

FOOD

cheese and crackers, soft breakfast bars, applesauce, fruit cups

06

PARTNERSHIPS

Example Ministry and Community Partners.



Example Ministry Partners

The following are some ideas for how ministries can participate in the Works of Mercy Challenge and/or the Mercy events.

Ministries:

- Respect Life – Baby formula, diaper, or clothing collections
- Funeral Ministry - Praying for the dead and attending funerals
- Ministry to The Sick - Taking communion to the sick
- Assisted Living/Homebound Ministry - Visit the John XXIII Residence and sing songs or help residents connect with family and friends over Facetime/Zoom
- Hospitality Ministry - Welcoming visitors and newcomers
- Prison Support Ministry - Writing letters to inmates
- Grief Support Ministry – Give comfort to those who are grieving with a simple note letting them know you are praying for them
- Prayer Ministry – Attend adoration, pray for the living and the dead, pray for the success of the challenge
- Financial Assistance Ministry – Assist people with paying rent, utilities or groceries

Things any ministry can do, or may already be doing:

- Food/Clothing collections
- Host a dinner or luncheon for those who are in need
- Host a walk-a-thon or run
- Volunteer at a local organization or Mercy event as a group
- Visit the homebound or elderly care facility
- Drive the elderly to Mass (partner with a ministry doing this if available)
- Cemetery clean-up (partner with a ministry if available)
 - St. Louis Catholic Cemetery, Tampa
 - Calvary Catholic Cemetery, Clearwater
 - Resurrection Cemetery, Seffner
 - Sacred Heart Cemetery (St. Joseph), Dade City

Example Partner Community Organizations

Explore opportunities to partner with local organizations. Ways to partner could include: participation in or benefit from a Mercy event or special collections, hosting a volunteer opportunity. This is not an exhaustive list, each parish or school may already have existing relationships with Catholic, Christian or Non-profit organizations that they would like to pursue.

CATHOLIC ORGANIZATIONS TO PARTNER WITH:

(Available to all parishes and schools throughout the Diocese)

- Catholic Charities: www.ccdosp.org
Contact Lou LRicardo@ccdosp.org. Catholic Charities has expressed the intention to partner with parishes and schools who will be hosting Mercy Events.
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul: www.svdptampa.org
- Pinellas Hope: www.pinellashope.org
- Tampa Hope: www.ccdosp.org/tampa-hope
- John XXIII Residence: www.angelsseniorliving.com
Catholic Assisted-living, contact DeaconPeterB@dosp.org
- Daystar Life Center (Pinellas): www.daystarlife.org
- Daystar Life Center (Citrus): www.daystarcitruscounty.org
- Nativity Outreach Food Bank: www.nativitycatholicchurch.org/foodbank
- Sacred Heart, Tampa - Hands of Hope: www.sacredheartfla.org/get-involved/franciscan-care/hands-of-hope
- Feeding Tampa Bay – Trinity Café: www.feedingtampabay.org
- Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops: www.flaccb.org/death-penalty *(also, pro-life, sex trafficking, and other advocacy ministries)*
- VIDES+USA (Salesian Ministry): www.vides.us
- Christ in the City: www.christinthecity.org *(Partnering with DOSP for a diocesan mission event in Tampa from May 18 - June, 8, 2025. Contact ChristInTheCity@dosp.org.)*

OTHER NON-PROFITS TO PARTNER WITH (By County):

Citrus County

- Meals on Wheels: www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org
- Lighthouse for the Visually Impaired and Blind: www.LVIB.org
- One Body Village, Stop Child sex slavery: www.onebodyvillage.org

Hernando County

- Meals on Wheels: www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org
- Lighthouse for the Visually Impaired and Blind: www.LVIB.org
- One Body Village, Stop Child sex slavery: www.onebodyvillage.org
- The Angelus: www.theangelus.com
- The Arc Nature Coast: www.thearc-naturecoast.org

Hillsborough County

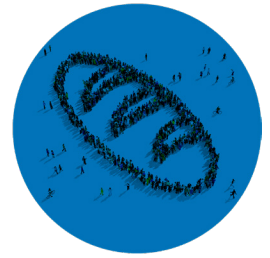
- Home Makers of Hope: www.homemakersofhope.com
- The Life Center of the Suncoast: www.thelifecenterofthesuncoast.com
- Habitat for Humanity: www.habitathillsborough.org
- Meals on Wheels: www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org
- One Body Village, Stop Child sex slavery: www.onebodyvillage.org
- Metropolitan Ministries: www.metromin.org
- Faith Café: www.faithcafetampa.org
- The Spring of Tampa Bay: www.thespring.org
- Created Tampa: www.createdwomen.com
- Somebody Cares Tampa Bay: www.sctb.org

Pasco County

- Meals on Wheels: www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org
- Lighthouse for the Visually Impaired and Blind: www.LVIB.org
- One Body Village, Stop Child sex slavery: www.onebodyvillage.org
- Kairos Prison Ministry: www.kairosfl.org
- Metropolitan Ministries: www.metromin.org
- The Volunteer Way: www.thevolunteerway.org
- Sunshine Christian Homes: www.sunshinechristianhomes.com
- Safety Town: www.pascosheriffcharities.org/pso-organizations/
- Youth and Family Alternatives: www.yfainc.org
- Gulfside Healthcare Services: www.gulfside.org
- Sunrise of Pasco County: www.sunrisepasco.org
- The Arc Nature Coast: www.thearc-naturecoast.org

Pinellas County

- Meals on Wheels: www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org
- One Body Village, Stop Child sex slavery: www.onebodyvillage.org
- Metropolitan Ministries: www.metromin.org
- Gulfside Healthcare Services: www.gulfside.org
- Homeless Empowerment Program: www.hepempowers.org
- Created Tampa: www.createdwomen.com
- Somebody Cares Tampa Bay: www.sctb.org
- House of Prayer: www.divineprovidence.org/house-of-prayer



07

HOST A MERCY EVENT

Do Good. Serve One Another.



This event offers a simple way to:

- become aware of mercy needs around us
- work with others to put our faith in action
- practice compassion and selflessness by doing something for others
- try a new way of serving that you haven't done before
- complete various Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy in one event



What is a Mercy Morning Event or a Days of Mercy Event?

Mercy Morning is a flexible, one-day event (though it can be extended into a multi-day event, known as Days of Mercy) that invites participants to engage in various Works of Mercy. Designed to accommodate individuals, families, groups, and people of all ages, Mercy Morning offers a hands-on experience where participants can actively perform Works of Mercy (the event is designed with Corporal Works of Mercy in mind, but Spiritual Works of Mercy can also be incorporated) in engaging, enjoyable, and meaningful ways.

The event is thoughtfully planned with today's busy schedules in mind, providing an event space that is open for several hours to allow participants to drop in at their convenience and stay as long as they like. This flexible format enables participants to visit different stations throughout the event and take part in a range of activities related to the Works of Mercy.

While Mercy Morning is ideally designed to incorporate multiple Works of Mercy, it can also be tailored to focus on a specific work, depending on the needs of your community. The event can be hosted in a parish hall or at one of your partner organizations. If you highlight all seven Corporal Works of Mercy in one event, set up multiple stations, each focused on a particular activity. For example, one station might package blessing bags for the homeless, another could involve preparing sandwiches for the hungry, and a third might offer the opportunity to write letters of encouragement to prisoners. This approach is family friendly as it allows for participation from people of all ages as participants can move freely between stations, and engage with different acts of mercy.

Example Stations

- **Feed the hungry** - a lunch packing station
- **Give drink to the thirsty** – stations to create “blessing bags” with water and light snacks for the homeless or a station packing formula and gifts for expectant mothers
- **Shelter the homeless** - a station filling “blessing bags” with hygiene products
- **Visit the sick** - a care package section to drop off for those who are ill
- **Visit the imprisoned** - a letter-writing station
- **Bury the dead** - a flower arrangement station for those who are grieving
- **Give alms to the poor/ Clothe the naked** - a clothing/sock station

Preparation for the Mercy Event

Finalize Stations and Special Collections

1. Your Works of Mercy Team will pick a date for this event and for any special collections prior to it. Decide which Works of Mercy you want to highlight at your event - just one, several, or all fourteen? Decide which special collection(s) to host in preparation for your event. Decide what activity you will host for each work of mercy.

Select Event Location and Storage

2. Decide where the event will take place - school lunch room, parish community center, or at a partner organization. The location should have enough space for stations, activities, and participants to move freely. If your event is off-site, work closely with the partner organization to coordinate space and resources. Also, choose where you will host the special collections and store donations and supplies.

Seek Donations for Supplies

3. Seek out donations to supply the event stations. For example, if you will be making sandwiches to feed the hungry, seek donations from grocery stores or purchase the ingredients needed. Consider how many participants you anticipate, secure enough donations to support these efforts.

Invite Leaders and Community Partners

4. Reach out to ministry leaders, community partners, principals, priests and other key leaders to invite them to participate in the event. A list of potential community partners is included, in the section titled *Example Partner Community Organizations*.

Engage with Leaders and Community Partners

5. Engaging with ministries and community partners adds depth to the event and expands your support network. They can participate in a variety of ways such as

provide leadership or support for stations, provide distribution services for the kits assembled, present information at the event about their ministry or service and more. Choose station captains to help plan the activities, gather necessary materials, and lead the station during the event.

Plan the Event Process and Materials

6. Develop a detailed plan for the event, including a timeline for all promotions and preparation tasks leading up to the event and on the day of the event. Use the sample timeline provided in the next section as a guide. Ensure you will have enough volunteers to manage stations, welcome and guide participants, and collect forms. Make a list of materials you will need for the event, such as:
 - Event Signage: Direct participants to the event space and identify each station. It's helpful to install these signs high enough so they are visible from across the room.
 - Station Supplies: Tables, tablecloths, bins, bags, markers, pens, paper or plastic bags, and any donation items.
 - Forms: Paper forms/passports and QR codes (see step 7 below) available to direct people to the official website form and make it easy for people to participate in the Mercy Challenge.

Prepare and Promote the Event

7. Begin preparing the materials for the event and start promoting it through various channels. Sample promotional materials, such as flyers, social media posts, and email templates, are included in this manual. Use multiple channels to spread the word: parish bulletins, newsletters, emails (e.g., Flocknote), social media, etc.

Making It Count - Participation Form

8. Create a "Passport of Mercy" for participants to track their completed Works of Mercy

(similar to the challenge form). This passport can serve as a fun and interactive way for participants to engage with each station. Participants can mark their passport, which will be submitted online for the diocesan Mercy Challenge. Ensure that volunteers are available to assist with this process and encourage participants to submit their forms before leaving.

Host Special Collections

9. Begin your special collections in advance of the event. These can run for a few weeks before the event to allow time for gathering enough donations. Ensure there are volunteers available to manage the donations.

Host Your Event

10. Ensure all stations are set up and fully stocked. Consider inviting local school or parish musical groups to provide live music or interludes throughout the day. You might also provide light snacks and drinks to keep participants energized. Make sure volunteers are available to welcome people to the event, provide guidance on stations, and hand out passports.

Process Completed Forms

11. Have a designated team member process completed passports/forms. Enter the data into the diocesan challenge website to ensure that the completed Works of Mercy are recorded towards your community's overall participation in the challenge. Don't forget to track youth and adult participation.

Send Thank-You Notes

12. After the event, take time to send thank-you notes or emails to everyone who contributed to the event. Perhaps, consider also creating a short "thank you" video of the event highlighting the success of the event and expressing gratitude for all involved. Show it to your parishioners at Mass, through social media, or with a thank-you email.



Sample Timeline for a Mercy Event

The following sample timeline is for a Mercy Morning event, adapt it for your event needs.

DATE	DESCRIPTION
Week 1	Set dates for collections, Mercy event(s), or any other events/programs; assign responsibilities facilitated by the Leadership Responsibility Sheet. Decide which Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy to highlight and what activities to host.
Week 1	Place on WBVM 90.5 - MySpiritFM "Community Calendar" and the DOSP Calendar.
Week 1	Invite/schedule priests, principals and any other leaders to attend Mercy events or other events.
Week 2	Begin to plan the event: design stations, partner with Catholic and other non-profits for the event.
Week 2	Clergy should decide if and when they will integrate the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy into homilies. Coordinate bulletin covers, inserts, slides, and announcements to support the work of mercy that is unpacked during the homily. Please see the Liturgical section of the <i>Leadership Responsibility Worksheet</i> for assistance.
Week 3	Seek/solicit donations for materials to be used during the event.
Week 3	Develop postcards to be sent to participants promoting the challenge and Mercy event
Week 3	Recruit volunteers to assist the stations at the Mercy Event
Week 3	Begin bulletin and other announcements (email, newsletter, etc.) inviting participants to Mass for the homily series (if applicable), promoting the challenge and "save the date" for the Mercy event.
Week 3	Develop webpages for the challenge and events and link it to the diocesan website for the Mercy Challenge (www.Mercy2025.org)
Week 4	Second round of announcements (bulletin, email, newsletter, etc.)
Week 4	Check in with Planning Team on the progress/deadlines as facilitated by the Leadership Responsibility Sheet
Week 4	Mail Postcards
Week 4	Unveil website page(s)
Week 4	Order any materials needed for the Mercy Event
Week 5	Third round of announcements (bulletin, email, newsletter, etc.) and first pulpit announcement (if applicable)
Week 5	Begin social media posts (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

DATE	DESCRIPTION
Week 5	Update website as needed
Week 5	Determine how the completed Works of Mercy individual efforts will be recorded at www.Mercy2025.org . Recruit volunteers who will be responsible for recording any forms. (Participants are welcome to complete their entries in the website themselves.)
Week 6	Parishes: Prepare bulletin for homily series (bulletin cover, pastor's letter, bulletin announcement for Mercy event, insert, etc.)
Week 6	Design slides for any monitors in church or around campus advertising the event. Add banners or posters around the campus to advertise the event.
Week 6	Parishes: Provide information to Small Groups that correlate the homily with the small group study on the Corporal Works of Mercy.
Week 6	Fourth round of announcements (bulletin, email, newsletter, etc.) and second pulpit announcement (if applicable)
Week 6	Social media posts (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) - Ask how they are doing with the Mercy challenge
Week 6	Update website as needed.
Week 6	Gather all materials needed for the event. Make directional signs for the event site itself (internal signs to direct where to complete the Works of Mercy)
Week 7	Parishes: Prepare bulletin for homily series (bulletin cover, pastor's letter, bulletin announcement for the Mercy event, insert, etc.)
Week 7	Fourth round of announcements (bulletin, email, newsletter, etc.) and second pulpit announcement (if applicable)
Week 7	Social media posts (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) - Ask how they are doing with the Works of Mercy Challenge
Week 7	Update website as needed
Week 7-Week 8	Submit short radio announcements or community calendar submissions to local radio stations to advertise Works of Mercy Event – especially with MySpiritFM. (optional)
Week 7-8	Go over the plan and report progress, ensuring all target deadlines are met (facilitated by the Leadership Responsibility Worksheet). What last minute items still need to be addressed, how will it be addressed and by whom?
Week 8	Advertise on social media about the Works of Mercy Event (optional)
Week 8	Set up the event, ensure everything is ready the night before the Mercy event. Be sure there are enough forms/passports for people to mark the number of Mercy activities.
Day of Event	Have Fun! Run the program! Record the activities at www.Mercy2025.org
Week 9	Write thank yous to all those who helped!

08

PUBLICITY & COMMUNICATIONS

Samples for the Challenge and Mercy Event.

The following pages contain some of the materials available for promoting the initiative as well as sample materials for promoting your events. Many more materials, including print materials and graphics are available on the diocesan website.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Visit the diocesan challenge website www.dosp.org/Jubilee2025/MercyChallenge for other promotional materials like social media graphics, Mass slides, prayer cards, banners and more!



Challenge - Publicity and Communication Samples

Email/Flocknote Sample Text:

“During the Holy Year, we are called to be tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind.” - *Spes Non Confundit* (Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee Year 2025)

As part of the Jubilee Year, the Diocese of Saint Petersburg intends to serve God by completing 1,000,000 Works of Mercy. We are calling this our “Acts of Mercy Challenge”. Please join us! All you need to do is serve God through one (or more) of the Corporal or Spiritual Works of Mercy. You can do this as an individual, with a friend, with family, or as a team (perhaps a Church small group or ministry). Visit the diocesan website and submit your work of mercy. www.Mercy2025.org

Flyer and Bulletin Inserts:

See the provided sample flyers. Additionally, there are topical bulletin inserts that correspond/support the homily and/or Corporal Works of Mercy. (i.e., speaking about feeding the hungry, include a bulletin insert about the Corporal Works of Mercy on feeding the hungry). Consider inserting flyers in all parish mailings leading up to your event.

Social Media Sample Text:

- In 2025 I will...do something good for others! 2025 Acts of Mercy Challenge.
- Fun service activities with your friends. Participate in the 2025 Acts of Mercy Challenge.
- Have family fun doing acts of mercy. Join in the 2025 challenge!
- Doing good for others – 2025 Acts of Mercy Challenge!
- Do good. Serve one another. Make it count. 2025 Acts of Mercy Challenge.

Post Card:

1,000,000 Acts of Mercy Challenge

January – September 2025

Go to www.Mercy2025.org to log your Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy

Include the dates of your collection(s), Mercy event, and Homily Series (where applicable).

Include your Mass schedule, address, and any helpful information.

Bulletin Announcements:

As part of the Jubilee Year, the Diocese of Saint Petersburg intends to serve God by completing 1,000,000 Works of Mercy. We are calling this our “Acts of Mercy Challenge”. Please join us! All you need to do is serve God through one (or more) of the Corporal or Spiritual Works of Mercy. You can do this as an individual, with a friend, with family, or as a team (perhaps a Church small group or ministry). Visit the Diocesan website and submit your corporal or spiritual work of mercy.

We’re doing great! Thank you for participating in our 2025 Jubilee Year - Acts of Mercy Challenge. At the time this bulletin went to press, together, we recorded over XXXX total Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy toward our Diocese goal of 1,000,000 acts by December. Wow!!! Keep up the great work! Our parish goal is to complete xx,xxx Works of Mercy!



Mercy Event - Publicity and Communication Samples

Email/Flocknote Sample Text:

Tomorrow is our Mercy Morning event, Saturday, August XX from 9am to 12pm. Please join us in the Life Center for this totally free event to make a difference by spreading Hope through Mercy. This morning is dedicated to creative ways for children and adults to do all seven Corporal Works of Mercy - all in one place! There will be music, snacks, faith in action, and family fun. Share the attached PDF with information about the event with your family and friends. God bless and see you there!

Flyers and Bulletin Inserts:

See the provided sample flyers. Additionally, have topical bulletin inserts that correspond/support the homily and or Corporal Works of Mercy. (i.e., speaking about feeding the hungry, include a bulletin insert about the Corporal Works of Mercy on feeding the hungry). Consider inserting flyers in all parish mailings leading up to your event.

Social Media Sample Text:

- Have Family Fun doing Works of Mercy. Friends, food and music!
- Family activities doing acts of mercy. Fun, food and music doing good!
- Have Family Fun doing acts of mercy. Enjoy friends, food and music!
- Family activities doing Works of mercy. Do good! Fun, food, music!
- Family Fun doing acts of mercy. Friends/food/music: doing good!

Post Card:

Mercy Morning

Date/Time of event

Creative ways for children and adults to do all seven Corporal Works of Mercy - all in one place!

Make a difference by spreading Hope through Mercy

Include the dates of your collection(s) and homily series (where applicable).

Bulletin Announcements:

SAVE THE DATE!

Mercy Morning on Saturday, August 30 from 9 am to 12 noon in the Parish Life Center. Have family fun enjoying the Corporal Works of Mercy. Enjoy friends, food, and music doing great things for others!

Next Saturday: Wake-up to Mercy Morning, a totally free event dedicated to creative ways for children and adults to participate in all seven Corporal Works of Mercy - all in one place! Join us for a morning of mercy in the Life Center on Saturday, August XX from 9am to 12pm and help make a difference by spreading Hope through Mercy. There will be music, snacks, faith in action, family fun and more!



Video Invitation Sample Script:

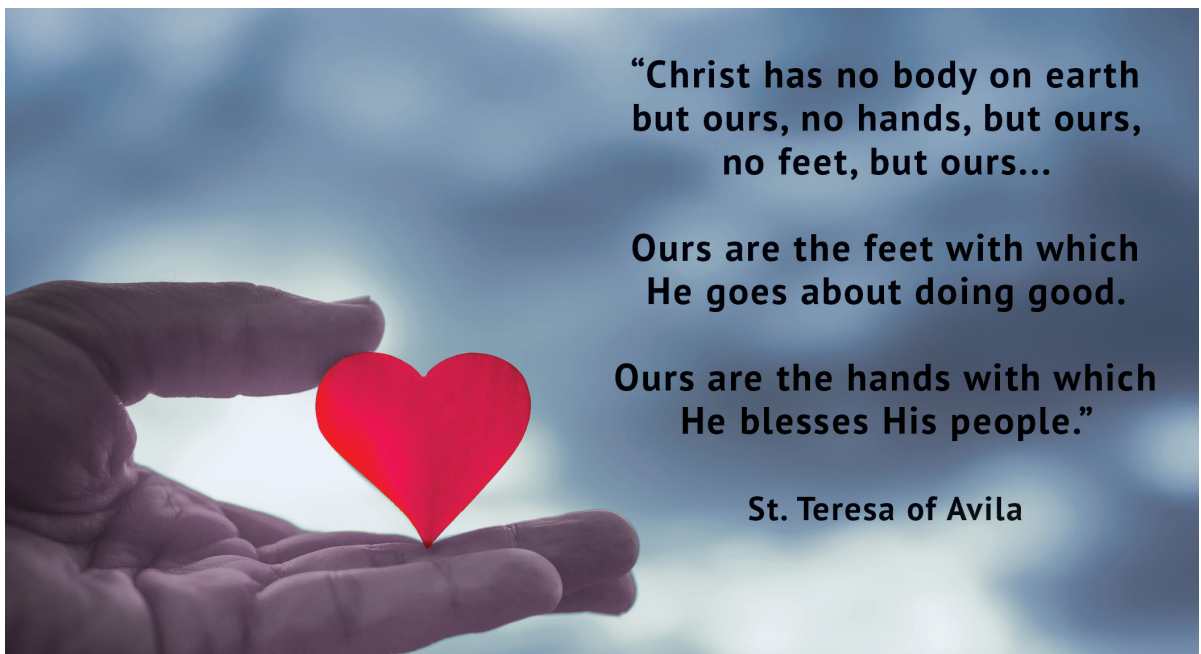
My name is (Your name) and I'm the (Your position) here at (Parish, school, or diocesan entity name). As children of God, we are called every day to give our hearts to God by extending our hands to our brothers and sisters and to all of humanity. We do that in a practical way through the Corporal Works of Mercy.

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, declared this year a Jubilee Year of Hope, and we will celebrate this Jubilee Year by being tangible signs of hope and making God's mercy manifest to our community through our (Days of Mercy/Mercy Morning event name). We challenge you, our families to come out on (date of event) to engage in individual Works of Mercy. The goal throughout the Diocese of Saint Petersburg is to complete together 1,000,000 Works of Mercy. Our parish goal is to complete xx,xxx Works of Mercy!

In our (building/location of event), we will:

- Feed the hungry by making 1000 lunch bags.
- Give drink to the thirsty by packing formula and gifts for expectant mothers.
- Clothe the naked by collecting 1000 pairs of brand-new socks/clothing.
- Visit the imprisoned by making 200 Christmas cards, writing letters and prayers to be mailed during the 2025 Advent season.
- Shelter the homeless by making 1000 blessing bags filled with hygiene products.
- Visit the sick by writing get-well cards and prayers to send to those from our parish who are in the hospital or homebound.
- Bury the dead by making flower arrangements and writing notes to families in our parish who have lost a loved one over the past year to let them know that we are thinking about them and that they are in our prayers.

Come and join us on (enter date) for our (Days of Mercy/Mercy Morning 2025) and engage in the Works of Mercy. Come and give your heart to God by giving your hands to our brothers and sisters in need. I look forward to seeing you all there. Thank you and God bless.



**“Christ has no body on earth
but ours, no hands, but ours,
no feet, but ours...”**

**Ours are the feet with which
He goes about doing good.**

**Ours are the hands with which
He blesses His people.”**

St. Teresa of Avila

Pastor Letter Samples

The following sample bulletin letters correspond with the 4-part homily series.

Pre-Weekend (July 26/27) - 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time Introduction to the Corporal Works

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

During our homily and mission series, we will go deeper in to the seven Corporal Works of Mercy – Feed the Hungry (week 1), Clothe the Naked and Visit the Imprisoned (week 2), Shelter the Homeless and Give Drink to the Thirsty (week 3) and Visit the Sick and Bury the Dead (week 4). We will look at ways to serve others through the corporal works, perhaps breaking the paradigm of how we normally think about these Works of Mercy and expanding our understanding. We invite you to participate in our Corporal Works of Mercy pilgrimage (you won't have to leave your neighborhood if you don't want to). With this pilgrimage, we challenge our parish, along with our diocesan community, to together complete 1,000,000 Corporal Works of Mercy. We invite you to engage in all seven Corporal Works of Mercy. Each week, in the bulletin, we will list ideas on how to undertake one or more of the Corporal Works of Mercy throughout the week. Do them as individuals, as a couple, as friends or family, or even as a team (perhaps in your small group or ministry).

Performing a corporal work of mercy doesn't necessarily mean doing something extra-ordinary like going to a soup kitchen (though it could be). It may mean calling up a neighbor, church member or family member who is alone, and having dinner with them. Clothing the naked may mean for some cleaning out their closets and donating their clothing to a clothing bank. Or it may mean helping an elderly person (in your family or someone you know from Church) put on their socks. (As we grow older and arthritis makes it hard to bend, having clean socks on your feet is a real gift!) All that is required to participate in this pilgrimage is to "do one small thing with great love and faith ... it will make all the difference." (Mother Teresa)

1st Weekend (August 2/3) - 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time Introduction to the Corporal Works and Feed the Hungry

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As promised, we begin our homily series this Sunday. We are calling it "The Magnificent Seven", with the intention of introducing or re-introducing to you the Church's Corporal Works of Mercy. Why are we doing this? First, the Holy Father, Pope Francis, has declared this a Jubilee Year of Hope, and as members of the great Body of Christ, we are called to participate in that Jubilee Year. Secondly, our world is in desperate need of mercy...not pity, but the healing, life-giving mercy that flows from the heart of the living God. We are those who have been given the choice – are we the bearers of that mercy or contributors to all that is unmerciful, unforgiving, unholy? If we choose the former, then it is important to know what the Church means when it calls us to be bearers of mercy.

And so we present our Summer Message Series, "The Magnificent Seven: The Corporal Works of Mercy" that will take us from this Sunday through August 31, first considering the Message, and then being called to the Mission. Our goal with this series is to, as a diocesan community of faith, complete 1,000,000 acts of mercy – which we will call our Corporal Works of Mercy pilgrimage. Each week, we will be offering suggestions on how you and your family can participate. The real goal however, is not a number, but an act of compassion, of mercy offered to one who is in need of mercy, and to grow in our understanding of who we are as Christians and what we are called to do by accomplishing these merciful acts.

We begin this Sunday with the first corporal work of mercy, to Feed the Hungry, and as we all know, there is a lot of hunger in our world, in our country, in our community, even in our neighborhoods. What do we do? Come, and hear.

2nd Weekend (August 9/10) – 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time Visit the Imprisoned and Clothe the Naked

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Our homily series, “The Magnificent Seven” continues this week with the next two Corporal Works of Mercy: Visit the Imprisoned and Clothe the Naked. Sitting at my desk pondering these things, I began reading the notes prepared for our homily series, and found it so clear and concise that I thought it would be valuable for us all.

This is what it says: “The migration of people across the world demonstrates the universal longing for a secure and lasting homeland. However, there is no permanent dwelling on earth. That homeland to which we journey – God’s kingdom – is offered to us by the Lord, if we place our trust in God’s promises. We are to make ourselves ready for that kingdom through a sense of solidarity, community and service. We need to be willing to move into an unknown future by trusting in God. These are the only entry requirements for the kingdom. The kingdom is to come, and we have to seek to build it.”

The notes go on to explain how that ‘building’ is accomplished through these next two Corporal Works of Mercy – visiting the imprisoned and clothing the naked...but I will leave it to our preachers to fill the specifics in for you. Come join your diocesan family in accomplishing 1,000,000 Works of Mercy over these next several weeks, in ways both great and small. Mother Teresa always said, “Do small things with great love.” That is the wisdom that drives the Corporal Works of Mercy. That is a wisdom all of us can embrace.

3rd Weekend (August 16/17) – 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time Give Drink to the Thirsty and Shelter the Homeless

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We continue our series this week with the next two, Give Drink to the Thirsty and Shelter the Homeless (Welcome the Stranger) We are called to do these works not only because we understand that, but for the grace of God our brother or sister could be myself or my family member. We enter into these corporal works because we recognize in one another the very holiness of God.

As we define these works, we immediately think of the common understanding to physically quench thirst and give shelter. Do you ever see construction workers on the road or lawn care maintenance workers in the searing heat – what about offering them a bottle of water? It also means to give drink who thirst for a knowledge of God – answering a child who wants to know who “God” is, enrolling your child in Religious Education or Youth Ministry or inviting a friend to Mass or to join a ministry. Shelter the homeless not only means serving in places like Pinellas Hope or Tampa Hope, but also “welcoming” someone new who may be sitting in your pew or talking to a parent or adult child who you may not have spoken to in years.

Our parish goal is xx,xxx Works of Mercy and is part of the diocesan effort to accomplish 1,000,000 Works of Mercy over this Jubilee Year of Hope. But as I have said to you before, it’s not so much about the number, but about a fellow Child of God in need. I hope you are feeling inspired and empowered to do this most sacred and important work. It is the very building up of the Kingdom, and it is what binds us closer together in love. Frequently in a parish or community we can feel nameless or anonymous, especially when calamity is visited upon us. We counter that anonymity by doing the work of Jesus Christ – the work we were all commissioned into through our Baptism – the Corporal Works of Mercy.

4th Weekend (August 23/24 – 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time) Visit the Sick and Bury the Dead

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I hope your heart and soul have been fed with our homily series, “The Magnificent Seven: The Corporal Works of Mercy”. I imagine from now on, whenever you hear the classic theme song from the movie, *The Magnificent Seven* what will go through your memory banks will be feeding the hungry, visiting the imprisoned, clothing the naked, giving drink to the thirsty, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick, and burying the dead. If so, then to a certain degree we have been successful. But only partially.

What would make this series a true success is its motivating us into Christian action, to DO the Works of Mercy. With that in mind, we will wrap up our series next weekend with our Mercy Morning event, held in our Life Center from 9:00am-Noon, Saturday, August XX. It’s an opportunity to bring the family and have some fun, doing good. There will be provided the means to accomplish all seven Works of Mercy right there in the comfort of the Life Center with family and friends, snacks, and music. We don’t think doing the work of building God’s Kingdom through participation in the Works of Mercy should be drudgery, but should be so basic to our instincts as Christians that it feeds our souls as we feed the hungry. (All acts performed at the Mercy Morning event will count toward our 1,000,000 Acts of Mercy Challenge!)

It would be such a powerful and gratifying conclusion to this wonderful series to have our Life Center full, full to overflowing with families young and old, large and small all focused on the great virtue of God’s infinite Mercy! Please plan on joining us for a truly landmark morning in the life of our parish.



RESOURCES

Informational Websites and Materials.

Acts of Mercy Examples

The following are resources and ideas for many wonderful and practical ways to undertake one or more of the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. As you do a work of mercy, remember to pray for the person/people that will benefit from it.

Websites with Informational Material:

The following are some of the websites out there with informational materials and resources on the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.

USCCB



Our Sunday Visitor



Divine Mercy



Corporal Works of Mercy Examples

Examples for each of the Corporal Works of Mercy. Some of these correlate to the homily series notes. This is not an exhaustive list, many more examples can be found online.



FEED THE HUNGRY

- Prepare a meal for your family and schedule at least one family meal per week.
- Put your phone away when eating with others.
- Choose not to overeat and avoid wasting food when shopping, preparing meals, and eating.
- Help in local efforts like the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Catholic Charities, Catholic Outreach, Helping Hands, and local food banks and food pantries.
- Serve at a local soup kitchen.
- Make a meal(s) for someone who is ill or who had a friend or relative pass away.
- Share a meal and conversation with someone who is homebound or who lives alone.
- Before meals: thank God and the cook for the food and pray for those lacking food.
- Participate in food drives.
- Schedule one family meal per week.
- Practice spiritual Holy Communion at least once a day (praying with Jesus in the Eucharist when one can't physically receive the Eucharist).
- Sign up for a gleaning project.
- Prepare or share a meal with someone grieving (the grief may be many months old).
- Bringing meals to a neighbor at a difficult time, such as after a stay in the hospital or at the death of a loved one.
- Re-visit the practices of fasting and abstinence, use the resources to help someone who needs a meal.

GIVE DRINK TO THE THIRSTY



- Provide a healthy water supply and infrastructure.
- Fix plumbing leaks.
- Show gratitude for the plentiful water we have by conserving water in our daily activities.
- Take a cold glass of water to a neighbor working outside.
- Pass out water bottles to the homeless or prepare blessing bags with water to share with people you often encounter at street corners.
- Give a bottle of water to a construction worker, lawn maintenance worker, or anyone who is working under the searing sun.
- Invite a friend, neighbor or family member to Mass (those who thirst for the knowledge of God).
- Donate baby formula.
- When sharing something with someone in need, our sharing should be considerate. Be thoughtful of their needs. (Cold water in the heat of the day.)
- If a child (or spouse) asks for a drink in the middle of the night, serve that child cheerfully with compassion.





CLOTHE THE NAKED

Clothing provides for two basic human needs: protection and dignity.

- Clean out closets and have a collection at Mass or take clothes to a local charity.
- Provide baby clothes to a local crisis pregnancy center.
- Finding the grace to be patient while dealing with a toddler who only wants to wear the blue shirt or helping a teen dress attractively, yet modestly.
- Donate clothing for school children.
- Provide socks and underwear for a local homeless shelter.
- Volunteer at a local charitable thrift store.
- Dress modestly and appropriately to show self-respect as well as respect for others.
- Help an elderly person put on their socks.
- Instead of buying clothes we want but do not need, use the same amount of money to buy new clothing items to donate to a thrift-shop or homeless shelter.
- If we discover a product/item was produced at the cost of the human dignity of those who made it, we should boycott that product and let the manufacturer know why.
- Confront the crime of sexual exploitation in society, particularly the plague of pornography.

- Build a house with Habitat for Humanity.
- Help local refugees.
- Welcome parishioners at the beginning and end of Mass.
- Make your family, co-workers, or anyone you encounter each day feel at home by showing your hospitality, acceptance, and respect for them.
- If someone is begging, give them a kind word and spare change. Treat them with dignity.
- Working to make your house a beautiful, orderly, welcoming and hospitable home reminds your family of their dignity as Children of God.
- Participate in the Diocesan Mission effort with Christ in the City (May 18-June 8, 2025)



VISIT THE SICK

- Visiting the sick can start with your family who might be having a tough day... By offering hot tea, a back rub, or making their favorite dish, etc.
- Volunteer at the hospital or assisted living, help residents connect with their loved ones via phone or video – dialing, or positioning the phone so they can talk.
- Provide companionship or housekeeping for the sick, mentally ill, elderly, and homebound.
- Join a ministry to the sick, bring communion to the homebound and nursing homes.
- Help the elderly to sign, address, and mail cards.
- Do yardwork or handyman tasks for the homebound.
- Drop off dinner to someone whose family member is sick.
- Call the parish for a priest to anoint someone who is in hospital or about to have a major surgery. Anointing of the sick is for the healing of both the body and spirit.
- Bring someone to an Anointing of the Sick service at the parish.

SHELTER THE HOMELESS



- Show hospitality to newcomers and visitors and invite them to return.
- Volunteer or donate resources to organizations that help the homeless.
- Support your local homeless shelter.
- Provide a home for orphans and foster children.

- Volunteer at John XXIII Residence in Lutz (or another assisted living center).
- Help drive the elderly to their doctor's appointment(s) and Sunday Mass.
- Offer spiritual bouquets for the sick.
- Make visits or cards to someone who is ill to remind them they are not alone. But be sensitive to individual needs – some people prefer privacy when unwell.
- Be humble to ask those who are sick what help they want (instead of assuming we know already).
- Pray for our loved ones who are sick, as well as our neighbors who have no friends or family at hand.
- When a child or spouse (or other loved one is sick) and you are called to care for them, refuse to treat him or her as a burden or inconvenience, even though your schedule has been thrown into chaos.

VISIT THE IMPRISONED



Also consider those imprisoned by the circumstances of life.

- Visit those in jails and prisons.
- Help the families of prisoners.
- Write to inmates who need social contact, try reaching out to a prison ministry.
- Provide Bibles, prayer books, or other religious literature for prisoners.
- Provide jobs to former prisoners.
- Visit the elderly shut-ins in our parishes, the residents of homes for the aged, and those who are trapped in addictions of various kinds.
- Call someone who is homebound and offer to go grocery shopping to them.
- Invite someone who is homebound and offer to bring them to Mass.
- If we give a child a time-out, visit them a few minutes later and talk them through their error, teach them what to do instead and work to rebuild their relationship with you. Show our children they still have worth and dignity even when they mess up.



BURY THE DEAD

- Provide companionship to the dying.
- Make a meal for a grieving family.
- Attend funerals/wake services.
- Attend a funeral even when the person is unknown to us or join a funeral ministry
- Comfort to the family of the deceased.
- Share grief support programs/materials with the grieving.
- Volunteer in your parish bereavement ministry.
- Help a widow or widower with tasks and invite them to events.
- Visit a cemetery and pray for the dead and take flowers.
- Join a respect life ministry or participate in their events.
- Volunteer with cemetery cleanup days.
- Pray the Divine Mercy chaplet and rosary with and for people who are dying.
- Send a note or make a phone call on the 6-month and one-year anniversary after the death of their loved one.
- Participate in a cemetery clean-up
- Donate to a parish fund to help those who cannot meet funeral expenses.
- Have Masses celebrated for the repose of the souls who have died.
- Help a child deal with the loss of a pet, or face the death of a beloved relative (requires compassion and sensitivity, even as you deal with your own grief).



Spiritual Works of Mercy Examples

Examples for each of the Spiritual Works of Mercy. Some of these correlate to the homily series notes. This is not an exhaustive list, many more examples can be found online.



COUNSEL THE DOUBTFUL

Everyone has moments of doubt in 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.

- Listen to counsel and receive instruction, that you may eventually become wise” (Prov 19:20).
- Answer questions patiently, even if the answer is obvious.
- Has someone asked you for advice? Orient your response to Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.
- Follow Christ with the witness of your life so that others may see God’s love revealed in your actions.
- Answer questions others have about the faith (consulting Catholic sources).
- Accompany a friend who is struggling with believing to join a parish group for service or faith formation, share a book you found useful in dealing with your friend’s faith concern, and worship at Sunday Mass.



TEACH OTHERS ABOUT GOD AND THE FAITH

Learn about our faith and be open to talking with others about our beliefs. There is always something more to discover about our faith.

- Go on a service trip or short term mission trip. No time? Donate to support someone on their service trip.
- Volunteer to help with religious education, OCIA, and youth programs at your parish
- Invite someone to go to Mass with you.
- Know your faith! Read through the USCCA to find out more about the Catholic faith and how to live it.
- Enroll your children/teens in a Catholic School, Parish Religious Education Program, or the Parish Youth Ministry Program.
- Ensure your children receive the sacraments.



COMFORT THE AFFLICTED

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 big difference.

- Lend a listening ear to those going through a tough time.
- Make a home cooked meal for a friend who is facing a difficult time.
- Write a letter or send a card to someone who is suffering or grieving.
- Reach out to someone who is going through a difficult time. A few moments of your day may make a lifetime of difference.





FORGIVE OFFENSES WILLINGLY

Do not judge, be supportive in helping others find their way and gently correct their mistakes. We can all learn to walk more closely with Christ.

- In humility we must strive to create a culture that does not accept sin, while realizing that we all fall at times.
- Don't judge, but guide others towards the path of salvation (see Mt. 7:1-2).
- When you correct someone, don't be arrogant. We are all in need of God's loving correction.
- We should journey together to a deeper understanding of our shared faith.
- Forgive those who have wronged or offended you. Do not gossip or complain about them to others.
- "Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother's eye" (Mt 7:5).



PRAY FOR THE LIVING AND 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.

- Request a Mass intention for a friend or family member who is going through a tough time.
- Request a Mass intention for a friend or family member who has passed away.
- Keep your own book of prayer intentions, writing down the names of those who you are keeping in your prayers.
- Ask a friend or family member if there is anything you can pray for them about.
- Through prayer, entrust your cares and concerns for those around you to God.
- Attend an adoration or prayer service.
- Pray for all vocations: to the priesthood, religious life, married life, and single life.



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.

- Frustrated with someone? Step away from the situation, take a few deep breaths, pray the Our Father, asking God for patience.
- Remember to forgive with grace and patience when someone wrongs you. Do not gossip or complain about them.



ENCOURAGE RECONCILIATION WITH GOD AND OTHERS

Forgiving others is difficult because we do not have God's limitless mercy and compassion. Jesus teaches us to forgive as God forgives, relying on him to help us show others the mercy of God.

- Drive someone to a reconciliation service.
- We learn to say sorry as kids, but how often do we really mean it? Let go of offenses, forgiveness transforms hearts and lives.
- Participate in "24-hours for the Lord" or other reconciliation service.
- Pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet.
- Request forgiveness from others you have wronged (from your spouse, siblings, children, co-workers).

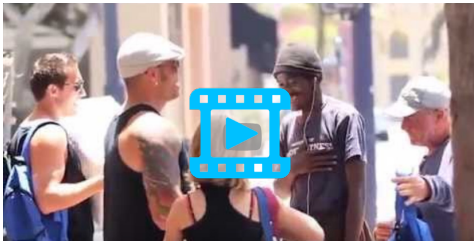


Videos

Video samples you might use to help share the message.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pOqL_wAk6sQ



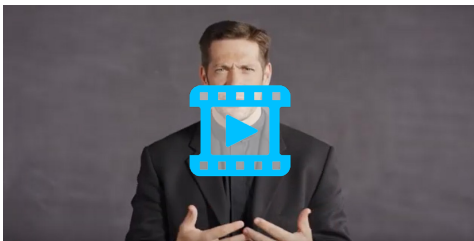
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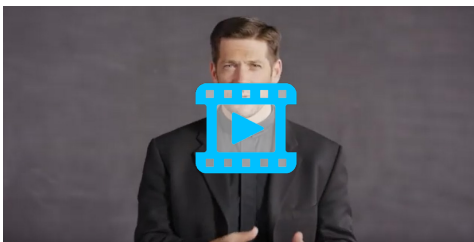
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08

GRANT OPPORTUNITY

Are You Ready to Join the Challenge? Grant Awards for Entities.

Is your parish or school interested in receiving a grant to support your pastoral care or outreach ministry? Does your youth group want to earn a grant for their service or mission trips? The Diocese of Saint Petersburg is excited to offer several grants available to parishes, schools and youth groups who participate in the challenge and track their acts.











Are You Ready to Join the Challenge?

Individual Entity Challenge: Each parish, school and diocesan entity will complete 2,025 Acts of Mercy during the Jubilee Year of Hope 2025.

Diocesan-wide Challenge: 1,000,000 Acts of Mercy

Challenge Dates: January 1, 2025 - December 15, 2025, by 11:59 p.m.

Any Works of Mercy performed between these dates may be counted, all works must be entered in the official diocesan challenge webpage form by the end date above in order to count towards the grants.

 <p>ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS FOR EACH PARISH OR SCHOOL</p> <p>5,000 WORKS OF MERCY \$1,000 FOR PASTORAL MINISTRY</p> <p>7,500 WORKS OF MERCY \$2,500 FOR PASTORAL MINISTRY</p> <p>10,000 WORKS OF MERCY \$5,000 FOR PASTORAL MINISTRY</p>		 <p>TOP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL</p> <p>\$5,000</p>	 <p>TOP HIGH SCHOOL</p> <p>\$7,500</p>	
 <p>TOP DIOCESAN ENTITY</p> <p>\$2,500</p>	 <p>TOP PARISH WITH MOST YOUTH PARTICIPATION</p> <p>\$7,500</p>	 <p>TOP "SMALL" PARISH*</p> <p>\$10,000</p>	 <p>TOP "MEDIUM" PARISH*</p> <p>\$10,000</p>	 <p>TOP "LARGE" PARISH*</p> <p>\$10,000</p>

FAQ

- Only one grant award will be provided to each parish or school, even if a parish, school or youth group qualifies for more than one category.
- Works of Mercy (Spiritual and Corporal) are to be accomplished between January 1, 2025, and December 15, 2025, by 11:59 a.m. Only one work or act may be attributed to a parish or school or diocesan entity (no double dipping).
- Only acts of mercy recorded on the official website, www.Mercy2025.org, by 11:59p.m. on December 15, 2025, will be considered. If a parishioner or student provides written information of their Works of Mercy to their parish or school, it will be the responsibility of the parish or school to enter the information into the official website.
- Parish size will be determined by the Mass attendance numbers submitted by parishes during the February 2025 Mass counts. One prize will be awarded to the top achieving "small" parish with weekly Mass attendance averaging under 750, the top "medium" parish with weekly Mass attendance averaging between 751-1,500, and one prize to the top "large" parish with weekly Mass attendance averaging greater than 1,501. (*Weekly Mass attendance based on the reported 2025 February Mass counts.)
- The grant committee of the Catholic Foundation of the Diocese of Saint Petersburg will review the distribution of the grants. The Bishop of the Diocese of Saint Petersburg will be the final arbiter.
- Awards will be announced no later than January 6, 2026, the end of the Jubilee Year.
- For questions, please contact the Chancellor for Administration at 727.344.1611 or at LLocey@dosp.org.

“During the Holy Year, we
are called to be tangible
signs of **HOPE** for
those of our brothers and
sisters who experience
hardships of any kind.”

- *Spes Non Confundit* (Hope Does Not Disappoint)
Papal Bull of Indiction (proclamation) for the Jubilee Year 2025

