

# Spiritual Works of Mercy

forgive instruct bear wrongs pray console advise comfort

## **B**EAR WRONGS PATIENTLY

Whether it be the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune or a hurtful loved one, we all endure wrongs. Patience in the face of wrong is a virtue, and a true work of mercy. This is probably the hardest Spiritual Work of Mercy. It is in our nature to complain when things don't go our way, but God wants us to work at being patient: even when someone seems incapable of being kind to us, even when we are wrongly accused of something, even when we have suffered an injustice. However, we also need to have the courage and charity to correct when needed, gently and positively. So, change the things you can and accept the things you can't by bearing wrongs patiently.

**Ideas:** Overlook minor flaws, pray for those who hurt you, work at being less critical.



## **P**RAY FOR THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

Christ prays for us and so we imitate him when we pray for others. Mary models Jesus in that she intercedes for others through prayer, we should follow this example. Prayer is our chat with God. We share with God our hopes, joys, fears and worries; our day. The most powerful way in which we can help someone, living or dead, is through prayer. We should be first to pray when we want to help others for prayer is powerful. When we want to accomplish mercy, we should remember what Alfred Lord Tennyson observed: "*More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.*" Our prayers to God aid those that need our help, and they benefit us as well!

**Ideas:** Offer to pray for people and then really do it. Encourage others to pray. And when you can't pray ask others to pray for you.

## **A**DMONISH SINNERS

We are all sinners, we all get things wrong. To admonish someone is to correct them when they have sinned. Just by looking in to the mirror we can see we are not perfect and acknowledging this to ourselves, we learn the humility and compassion needed to help others. But even imperfect, we are loved by God unconditionally! It can be difficult to strike the balance between loving the sinner and hating the sin and it does take courage to stand up for what's right and for what you believe in. This is what we are asked to do and we'll never learn if we don't practice. When you correct someone, do it with the love of Christ. Do it knowing that they too are loved unconditionally. Never correct someone as a way to get back at them or to prove you're in some way better or more knowledgeable!

**Ideas:** Be courageously compassionate in calling people, organisations & institutions to be faithful to Gospel values. Before correcting someone, pray that God will help you find the right words to say.



## **C**OUNSEL THE DOUBTFUL

We all met people who doubt there is a God, or at least a God who personally loves them. And at times in our own lives we can have the same questions. People of any age can come to a point when they question God's love, His Church, or His Commandments. Life throws all sorts of things at us, but God is present with us always - even when we are not present to God! Things like discouragement, hurt, self-pity, apathy, fear and despair can hold us back from the relationship and spiritual growth Christ wants for us. But remember Luke 24, The Road to Emmaus; Jesus meets the disciples where they are at, not where he would like/ expect/ want them to be, he does not judge them but lets them recount their story. So, make yourself available to listen, talk to and affirm people in ways that help others to see that they are a good gift. Members of the body of Christ need to encourage one another.

**Ideas:** Make time to spend with friends and be present to them, their concerns and their stories. Be aware of the presence of God in the chance encounter with the stranger. Consider getting training to be a spiritual mentor.

## **I**NSTRUCT THE IGNORANT

Ignorance is simply the absence of knowledge. However, as with any profession, there are basic things to know. As we profess our faith at Mass, we need to strive to understand fully what we believe. Learning about our faith is a lifelong journey. We can instruct those around us in our Faith just by talking about it and living it out. It is important to engage our friends in religious dialogue and to have the faith discussions, but actions do speak louder than words! Be the Gospel message you are trying to pass on!

**Ideas:** Study and read about the faith, beliefs and history of the Church. Read the Bible. If you don't know something try to find out and don't be afraid about sharing your faith with others.

## **F**ORGIVE OFFENCES

*Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.* In teaching us how to pray, Jesus teaches us how to live. To forgive someone who has wronged us is a very difficult thing, but it is exactly what Jesus asks us to do. Forgiveness is hard when others don't apologise. Yet, forgiveness frees us. Forgiving offences means overcoming our feelings of resentment and desire for revenge, and instead, treating the offender kindly. Abraham Lincoln's famous quote sums it up, "*The best way to destroy an enemy is to make them a friend.*"

**Ideas:** Pray for the ones who hurt you. Let go of grudges. Say 'sorry' when you know you have done something wrong & seek forgiveness from others. Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly.

## **C**OMFORT THE SORROWFUL

There may be many reasons why a person may be sorrowful or sad. Perhaps someone is ill or has died, perhaps having a personal crisis or family problems. You never know what the story is behind someone unless you listen. Reaching out or just being there, you can be the hands and heart of Jesus! Just listening and expressing empathy can be an avenue of grace.

**Ideas:** Volunteer in your parish, help with a ministry. Use your gifts and talents in the service of others.





Learn the **Spiritual Works of Mercy** and look for opportunities to practice them.

"Love is a mystery that transforms everything it touches into things beautiful and pleasing to God. The love of God makes a soul free."

~St. Faustina Kowalska

Let the Church always be a place of mercy and hope, where everyone is welcomed, loved and forgiven.

— *Pope Francis* —

## Memorize the Spiritual works of **MERCY** the easy way

You are encouraged to memorize and do your best to practice the spiritual works of mercy. The mnemonic device "**Be PACIFIC**" (like the ocean) can help. *Both the "e" in be and the second "i" in pacific are silent.*

**B**ear wrongs patiently

**E**

**P**ray for the living and the dead

**A**dmonish sinners

**C**ounsel the doubtful

**I**nstruct the ignorant

**F**orgive offences

**I**

**C**omfort the sorrowful

*Prayer*  
in action  
is love, *Love*  
in action  
is service.

MOTHER TERESA

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