

Practical Suggestions for Practicing the Works of Mercy

The Corporal Works of Mercy – The Corporal works of mercy are kind acts by which we help our neighbors with their everyday material and physical needs.

1. Feed the Hungry

- Go through cabinets and find extra food to donate. Donate all these items to the Athens Catholic Community Food Pantry or another agency that feeds the hungry.
- Decide not to eat out for a meal and donate that money to Catholic Charities, Good Works or another agency that feeds the hungry.
- Educate Yourself about World Hunger.
- Eat well (proper nutrition) and don't waste food.
- Buy locally. Don't throw away any food. Only eat and buy what you will eat before it expires.
- Share meals with others.

2. Give Drink to the Thirsty

3. Shelter the Homeless

- Set up a weekly/monthly time to visit the Timothy House (homeless shelter in Athens County) and bring a friend or two.
- Look for opportunities to help parishioners and neighbors care for their home (especially shut-ins and the elderly).
- Volunteer to beautify our churches – picking up trash, pulling weeds, etc.
- Support and volunteer for charitable organizations who care for the homeless (e.g. Catholic Refugee Service or Timothy House).
- Advocate for public policies and legislation that provide housing for low-income people.

4. Clothe the Naked

- Go through drawers and closets and find good-condition clothes and shoes to donate to Good Works or another charitable organization.
- Volunteer to work at a clothing drive or at a shelter where clothing is distributed to those in need.

5. Visit the Sick

- Dedicate yourself to praying for the sick in our community by signing up for our parish Prayer Line. E-mail Wendy at wendyserbonich@athenscatholic.org.
- Volunteer at the Obleness Hospital. Application and information at ohiohealth.com/oblenessvolunteer
- Volunteer at the Nursing Homes in Athens (Kimes, The Laurels, Hickory Creek).
- Send a card to someone you know who is sick or send a card to someone who doesn't have any visitors.
- Pay attention to those who have mental illnesses. Pray for them and offer support.

6. Visit the Imprisoned

- Donate or Volunteer at Athens Books to Prisoners.
- Watch the film 'Dead Man Walking' and learn about the ministry of Sr. Helen Prejean and The Innocence Project.
- Consider becoming a pen pal to a death row inmate. Visit Catholic Death Row Ministry at prisonministry.net/TDM for more information.
- Support efforts that seek the abolition of the death penalty.
- Volunteer at HVCRC (Hocking Valley Community Residential Center in Nelsonville correctional facility for adolescent boys who have committed a nonviolent crime).

7. Bury the Dead

- Be faithful to attending funerals to pray for the dead.
- Send a card to the families of those who are recently died (usually in the bulletin).
- Spend time with widows and widowers.

Spiritual Works of Mercy: The Spiritual Works of Mercy are kind acts by which we help our neighbors with their everyday spiritual and emotional needs.

1. Counsel the Doubtful

- Dedicate yourself to prayer and falling in love with God so that you might be a faithful witness.
- Respond to cynicism, skepticism, and doubt with patience, hope, and love.
- Be articulate about your own hopes and be articulate about your reason for hope.
- Ask people about their hopes and support them in attaining them.

2. Instruct the Ignorant

- Commit yourself to learning about the Catholic faith and share your understanding of the faith with others and with those who welcome it.
- Be unapologetic about your faith. Share your Catholic faith with friends, fellow students, coworkers.
- Take time to tutor and be a mentor for those who are just beginning tasks.
- Be sure to have holy reading; read books and articles on the Catholic faith and spiritual life.

3. Admonish Sinners

- Be courageous yet compassionate in calling people and institutions to be faithful to Gospel values.
- Intervene in situations in which people are clearly doing harm to themselves or others.
- Respond to negative and prejudicial comments with positive statements.
- Put an end to gossip by walking away or saying something redeemable about the person. Set a good example for others.
- Cultivate devotion to the moral life. Resolve to understand and share Catholic sexual ethics, social teaching, and the virtuous life.

4. Comfort the Afflicted

- Walk with others through their pain.
- Offer words of encouragement to those who seem discouraged.
- Offer positive words to fellow students or coworkers who are having a difficult time with their tasks.
- Compliment someone you don't know.
- Be present to those who are struggling or in emotional pain or despair.
- Offer sympathy to those who are grieving.

5. Forgive Offenses

- Experience the mercy of God in the Sacrament of Confession at least once a month.
- Pray for those who have wronged you and pray for the courage to forgive.
- Ask forgiveness from others. Examine your past and forgive yourself for your offenses.
- Let go of grudges.
- Go out of the way to be positive with someone you are having a difficult time with.

6. Bear Wrong Patiently

- Work at being less critical of others.
- Overlook minor flaws and mistakes in yourself and others.
- Give people the benefit of the doubt.
- Assume that people who may have hurt you did so because they are enduring pain of their own.

7. Pray for the Living and the Dead

- Pray a rosary at Mount Calvary Cemetery.
- Offer prayer intention at mass for diseased relatives.
- Call or text a family member or friend on the anniversary of someone who has passed away.