



Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy

During this month we officially bring closure to the Year of Mercy. How fitting for us as Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia that we also celebrate the birthday of our foundress, Mother Francis Bachmann, on November 14. When we revisit her life, we are reminded of how deeply she embraced the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.

As children we learned to recite the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy in our religion/catechism classes. Now, as adults, we are called to put these works of mercy into practice because we believe that, “Mercy is the Beating Heart of the Gospel.”

We can refresh our memories as we recall:

Corporal Works of Mercy

1. To feed the hungry.
2. To give drink to the thirsty.
3. To clothe the naked.
4. To visit the imprisoned.
5. To shelter the homeless.
6. To visit the sick.
7. To bury the dead.

Spiritual Works of Mercy

1. To admonish the sinner.
2. To instruct the ignorant
3. To counsel the doubtful.
4. To comfort the sorrowful.
5. To bear wrongs patiently.
6. To forgive all injuries.
7. To pray for the living and the dead.

The bodily or Corporal Works of Mercy challenge us to enter into the troubles or what is lacking in another. We have only to read the Gospels and follow Jesus’ ministry to learn how we may likewise be the Good Samaritan.

When we reflect on the Spiritual Works of Mercy, we touch another person in a different way. People can have every physical need met and still be hurting or unhappy inside. There could be something missing in their life causing the need for spiritual comfort.

In conclusion we might consider three points:

- **PRAY** for those in need of help, the poor, and vulnerable.
- **LEARN** about those who are troubled by reading the news, connecting with social media—Catholic Relief Services, our Franciscan Action Network, and other organizations who strive to meet the needs of our brothers and sisters.
- **ACT** by holding the Jubilee Year of Mercy close to your heart and continuing to live the Spiritual and Corporal works of Mercy.

The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy are actions by which we come to aid our neighbor in special ways. The ordinary deeds done daily to relieve the corporal and spiritual needs of others are truly works of mercy in which we reflect the Face of God.

Sister Joan Dew