

Lesson 26: The Corporal Works of Mercy

Please click twice to watch the video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfWEUw0iwAQ&list=PLKsOUfYtz1JWgeOserfZWgTvUSls2MU3r&index=40>

Matt 25: 31- 46: ³¹ *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.*

³⁴ *“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’*

³⁷ *“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’*

⁴⁰ *“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’*

⁴¹ *“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’*

⁴⁴ *“They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’*

⁴⁵ *“He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’*

⁴⁶ *“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”*

The Corporal Works of Mercy are based on this gospel passage, the one in which Jesus identifies himself squarely with the poor and marginalized: “Whatever you did for one of these least brothers and sisters of mine, you did for *me*.” Jesus’ message to us: “I have loved you and given myself for you. Follow my example and love the way I have loved you.”

What we are called to today – in the midst of our modern world and busy lives - is to look beyond our own busy-ness and pay attention to those around us who are in need.

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

Feed the hungry: Everyone needs food for their body. It is an act of love to help others to obtain their bodily nourishment, especially those in greatest need.

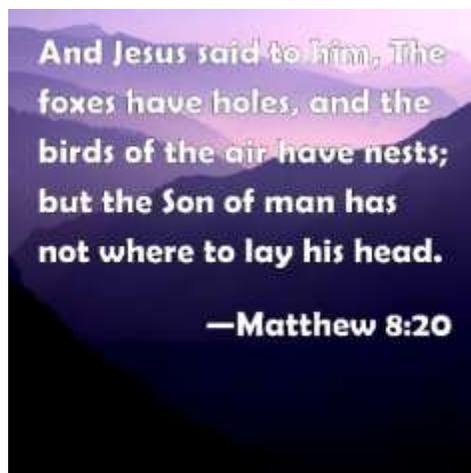


Give drink to the thirsty: What is said of food also applies to drink.



Clothe the naked: Everyone needs clothing for warmth, protection, modesty and dignity. It is an act of love to help others obtain clothing, especially those who need help.

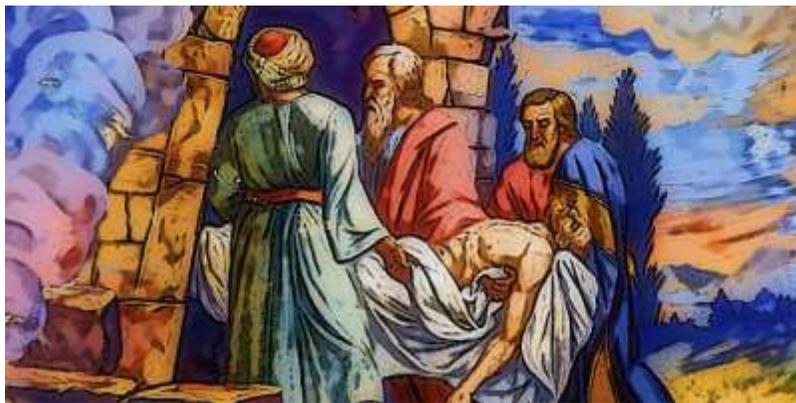
Shelter the homeless: Everyone needs shelter. Some people live in cardboard homes; some people live in homes made of discarded materials; many people are homeless. To help the homeless obtain shelter or to preserve it is an act of love.



Visit the sick: Helping sick people in any way is an act of love.

Visit the imprisoned: Those in prison and many other persons and their families suffer hindrances or dangers to freedom. Not all who are imprisoned are in jail – the homebound, those in nursing homes. Helping them, visiting them or protecting them is an act of love.

Bury the dead: Burying the dead is a corporal work of mercy, although the practice isn't strictly about burying a dead person. It also encompasses praying for the dead, including attending their funerals and visiting their graves. It is an act of love to show respect for the bodies of the dead, since during life, they were temples of the Holy Spirit and received the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion.



Our Final Judgment will be based largely on love of God but manifested on our love for neighbor. Indeed, using the words of St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta: “We must find Jesus present in the distressing disguise of the poor.” St. Vincent de Paul, known for his great love for the poor, actually called the poor “his masters”.

