

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR PRACTICING MERCY (PART 2)

SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

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

INSTRUCTING

- commit yourself to learning about the Catholic faith. Share your understanding of the faith with others and with those who welcome it
- share your insights, knowledge, and skills with others, especially friends, fellow students, coworkers
- take time to “tutor” those who are just beginning tasks
- read good literature and encourage others to do the same.

ADVISING

- 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; set a good example for others.

CONSOLING

- work at being optimistic and avoiding cynicism
- respond to cynicism, skepticism, and doubt with hope
- be articulate about your own hopes
- ask people about their hopes and support them in trying to attain them.

COMFORTING

- 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
- be present to those who are struggling or in emotional pain or despair
- offer sympathy to those who are grieving.

FORGIVING

- pray for those who have wronged you and pray for the courage to forgive;
- ask forgiveness from others;
- let go of grudges; go out of your way to be positive with someone you are having a difficult time with.

BEARING WRONGS PATIENTLY

- work at being less critical of others
- overlook minor flaws and mistakes
- 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
- pray for those who have wronged you.

PRAY FOR THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

- in your daily prayers include the names of your loved ones: name the name and let it be followed by a pause of silence
- pray for strangers, people you don't know, people you disagree with and especially those you perceive as your enemies
- as you sit silently in prayer call to mind the names of people you know, living and dead. Gaze upon them with compassion.

* Some of the above suggestions need to be adapted for young children and should not be practiced without the supervision or accompaniment of an adult