



JULY 2016: SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

Bulletin Reflection - *This reflection is sized to fit in a column of a parish bulletin.*

Jubilee Year of Mercy – The Spiritual Works of Mercy

Jesus said “Blessed are the merciful, for mercy shall be theirs” (Mt 5:7), which makes the practice of the spiritual works of mercy a win-win for everyone! When we **instruct the ignorant and counsel the doubtful**, we’re forced to brush up on our own faith in order to properly inform others. How many misunderstandings about Church teaching could be prevented if we understood not just *what* She teaches, but *why*!

Admonishing sinners isn’t about judging someone’s heart; it’s about those everyday moral decisions about right and wrong that we make whenever we decide not to steal, gossip, lie, etc. When we admonish sinners with love, we reaffirm our own convictions and make this world more civil and loving.

To bear wrongs patiently not only impresses those who offend us, it makes us stronger in body, mind and spirit. Paybacks might feel good, but they also introduce discord and division into our world. When we bear wrongs patiently, we become channels of peace.

Scripture and science agree that **forgiving offenses willingly**, letting go of grudges and bitterness, makes people happier, healthier, and better able to meet the challenges of everyday life.

Comforting the afflicted brings the merciful touch of God to those most in need. Our own faith is reinforced when we see how God’s presence can strengthen a soul in the midst of suffering.

Praying for the living and the dead unites us to the full Body of Christ – both in heaven and on earth – and invites the power of God into the lives of our living and deceased loved ones. When we give God’s mercy to others, it becomes a blessing to us all!

-Susan Brinkmann, O.C.D.S., Catholic Life Institutes, Bedminster, PA

Quote from Catholic Tradition:

“I can’t stop praying for poor sinners who are on the road to hell. If they come to die in that state, they will be lost for all eternity. What a pity! We have to pray for sinners! Praying for sinners is the most beautiful and useful of prayers because the just are on the way to heaven, the souls of purgatory are sure to enter there, but the poor sinners will be lost forever. All devotions are good but there is no better one than such prayer for sinners.” –St. John Vianney

“Jesus came for two reasons: he came to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.” –Dorothy Day

To continue reflecting on this theme, consider one of these resources!

- **Recommended Book for the Month:** *Introduction to the Devout Life*, St. Francis de Sales
- **Lighthouse Catholic Media CD:** *Seven Deadly Sins - Seven Lively Virtues* by Bishop Robert Barron