

Guided Reflection on the Corporal Works of Mercy

Let's take a moment to get comfortable now.

Make sure you're in a position where you can be comfortable and still for the next 20 minutes.

Let's quiet ourselves. Slowly and quietly breathe in to the count of 5. (1,2,3,4,5)

Hold your breath for 1 second.

Now slowly and quietly breathe out to the count of 5 (1,2,3,4,5)

Let's do that again. (repeat)

Now, imagine that everyone else in this room just vanished and that you are all alone, enjoying the quiet.

Before long, Jesus walks in and sits next to you.

He asks how you are doing. Talk to him.

He explains that he is here today to ask you to reveal his presence to others.

You ask him, "Jesus, what do I have to do to reveal your presence to others?"

Jesus says, "the most important thing to do is to care for the needs of others. I want you to show mercy to others by tending to their needs whenever you can."

You ask Jesus, “what do you mean? What kind of needs?”

Jesus says, “let me tell you about the needs that people have and how you can help them:

I want you to recognize when people are hungry and thirsty. Start in your own home. People don’t have to be starving to be hungry. Think about how you can help at meal time in your family. Help set the table. Help to prepare the food in the kitchen. Help to clean up afterwards. But also, keep in mind all the people in the world who don’t have food and water like you do. Pay attention to how you can help with food drives, support food pantries, work at a soup kitchen, or give money to people who feed the hungry.

I want you to shelter the homeless. You are very lucky to have a good roof over your head. Take care of your home. Help your neighbors to care for their homes. Pay attention to some of the ways that you can support people who work with the homeless. Homeless shelters need donations of soap, shampoo, and other personal items...maybe you can help by donating some of these.

I want you to clothe those who have no clothing. Again, you are very lucky to have warm clothes and shoes on your feet. Thank your parents for providing you with clothing and try not to get hung up on spending a lot of money on clothes. Go through your drawers and your closet and pack up some clothing that you can give to someone less fortunate.

I want you to visit the sick and imprisoned. I know that you’re not old enough to visit people in jail and hospitals even have age limits. But there are other ways you can be present to people. You can call or send a card to someone who is sick. If you have relatives that can’t get out of the house often because of their age or sickness, spend some time with them. People don’t have to be in jail to be imprisoned. Some people are imprisoned in their own homes because of sickness. Of course, if any of

your friends are sick, be sure to visit them or call them...it will mean a lot to them.

I want you to be of help to others who are suffering the death of a loved one. I know it's not fun to go to a wake or a funeral, but it means so much to the people who are grieving to just know that you care and that they are not alone. If you have grandparents or other relatives who are widows or widowers, spend some time with them. They can be very lonely missing their loved ones who have died. You probably even have friends who have lost a loved one. Be sure to show that you care and that you are there for them.

Finally, I want you to do what you can to help the poor. I know you probably don't have a lot of money of your own but you'd be surprised to know just how many people in the world have far less than you have. Do what you can to share with those in need. Save your change in a jar at home and every once in a while, donate it to those who work with the poor. Instead of buying something for yourself, every once in a while, buy something for the poor or give the money to help those who are poor.

Jesus pauses and then says, I'm not asking you to change the world. But if you and all of my followers do what you can, the world will change. I want you to do works of mercy: feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned, bury the dead, and give to the poor. Will you consider revealing my presence to the world?

Tell him that you want to reveal his presence to others but that you need his help. Talk to Jesus about what's keeping you from truly revealing his presence to others

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Jesus knows that it's time for you to move on now. He asks if there's

anything else you want to say to him or ask him. Take time to do that now.

Thank Jesus for this time together.

Watch as he walks out of the room.

Spend a quiet moment now with the Holy Spirit.

Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous ¹⁶ will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'