



Good day Worthy Knights, in this part 109, the Seven Works of Mercy

Wikipedia

**Works of mercy** are practices considered meritorious in Christian ethics. The practice is popular in the Catholic Church as an act of both penance and charity. In addition, the Methodist church teaches that the works of mercy are a means of grace which lead to holiness and aid in sanctification.

The works of mercy have been traditionally divided into two categories, each with seven elements:

- "Corporal works of mercy" concern the material and physical needs of others.
- "Spiritual works of mercy" which concern the spiritual needs of others.

Pope John Paul II issued a papal encyclical "*Dives in misericordia*" on 30 November 1980 declaring that "Jesus Christ taught that man not only receives and experiences the mercy of God, but that he is also called 'to practice mercy' towards others."

### In Catholicism

Based on Jesus' doctrine of the sheep and the goats, the corporal and spiritual works of mercy are a means of grace as good deeds; it is also a work of justice pleasing to God. The precept is an affirmative one, that is, it is of the sort which is always binding but not always operative, for lack of matter or occasion or fitting circumstances.

In general, it may be said that the determination of its actual obligatory force in each case depends largely on one's capacity. There are easily recognizable limitations which the precept undergoes in practice so far as the performance of the corporal works of mercy are concerned.

Likewise, the law imposing spiritual works of mercy is subject in individual instances to important reservations. For example, some may require tact, prudence, or knowledge. Similarly, to instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, and console the sorrowing is not always within the competency of everyone.

However, to bear wrongs patiently, to forgive offences willingly, and to pray for the living and the dead, do not require some special array of gifts or talent for their observance.

In an address on the 2016 World Day of Prayer for Creation, Pope Francis suggested "care for creation" as a new work of mercy, describing it as a "complement" to the existing works. Francis characterized this new work as having both corporal and spiritual components.

- Corporally, it involves "daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness".
- Spiritually, it involves contemplating each part of creation to find what God is teaching us through them.

This pronouncement extensively quoted the encyclical *Laudato si'*, and Cardinal Peter Turkson, who helped write the encyclical, clarified that the addition of this work of mercy was part of Francis' intention for *Laudato si'*.

## Corporal works of mercy

Corporal works of mercy are those that tend to the bodily needs of other creatures. The standard list is given by Jesus in Chapter 25 of the Gospel of Matthew, in the famous sermon on the Last Judgment. They are also mentioned in the Book of Isaiah.

The seventh work of mercy comes from the Book of Tobit and from the mitzvah of burial, although it was not added to the list until the Middle Ages.

The works include:

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

## Spiritual works of mercy

Just as the corporal works of mercy are directed towards relieving corporeal suffering, the aim of the spiritual works of mercy is to relieve spiritual suffering.

The works include:

1. To instruct the ignorant.
2. To counsel the doubtful.
3. To admonish the sinners.
4. To patiently bear those who wrong us.
5. To forgive offenses.
6. To comfort the afflicted.
7. To pray for the living and the dead.

## In Methodism

In Methodist teaching, doing merciful acts is a prudential means of grace.

Along with works of piety, they are necessary for the believer to move on to Christian perfection.

In this sense, the Methodist concern for people at the margins is closely related to its worship. As such, these beliefs have helped create the emphasis of the social gospel in the Methodist Church.



Clothe the Naked, The Seven Acts of Mercy  
Pieter Bruegel the Elder 1559