The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities. Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently.

Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 2447

“Blessed are the merciful.”
Matthew 5:7a

“Blessed are they who hear the divine word, jealously keep it, and faithfully fulfill it.

Pray, brethren, pray fervently for someone who is here among you in great need of prayer.

My mission is precisely to console and counsel the afflicted ... you are frantically seeking happiness and truth, that is God. Purify your heart of every human passion, humble yourself to the earth and pray. In this way, you will certainly find God, Who will give you serenity and peace in this world and eternal beatitude in the next.”

Saint Padre Pio
Younger Saints
1. f
2. b
3. d
4. g
5. b
6. e
7. a
8. c
9. b
10. g

Older Saints
The seven Spiritual Works of Mercy are:
1. Admonish the sinner.
2. Instruct the ignorant.
3. Counsel the doubtful.
4. Comfort the sorrowful.
5. Bear wrongs patiently.
6. Forgive all injuries.
7. Pray for the living and the dead.
Examples will vary.

The Corporal Works of Mercy
Memory, Grades 4-6

1. Feed the hungry.
2. Give drink to the thirsty.
3. Shelter the homeless.
4. Clothe the naked.
5. Visit the sick.
6. Visit the imprisoned.
7. Bury the dead.
(See Matthew 25:31-46 and CCC 2447.)
THE SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

From the time of his conversion until his death, Saint Paul practiced and preached the Spiritual Works of Mercy. Right after his conversion, he began to boldly preach in the name of the Lord. (See Acts 9:28-29.)

Paul spent his new life in Christ trying to help others know the Lord. Paul knew the Lord intimately because he took on Christ. He used the virtues that would enable him to reflect Jesus always.

Paul’s life was about reflecting Christ in order to lead others to Christ. We, too, can practice the Works of Mercy to become more like Christ.

Works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbors in their needs. When we choose to do them daily, they become such an important part of who we are that it is natural for us to act and respond in a way that reflects Jesus.

Each person is to be like Jesus always. Our actions of Christian love and kindness cannot be set aside only for holy days or seasons like Lent or Advent. We should be practicing them every day.

We become more like Jesus every time we perform an act of mercy. They should not be thought of as chores ... they should bring us joy. Even when they are difficult and require sacrifice from us, we can rejoice that they are evidence of Christ living in, and working through, us.
The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Paragraph 2447, tells us that there are seven Spiritual Works of Mercy:

1. Admonish the sinner.
2. Instruct the ignorant.
3. Counsel the doubtful.
4. Comfort the sorrowful.
5. Bear wrongs patiently.
6. Forgive all injuries.
7. Pray for the living and the dead.

1. **Admonish the Sinner**

To admonish someone is to correct them when they have sinned. Most people know when they have sinned, but sometimes they are unaware or have forgotten that their actions are sinful. A loving Christian wishes no one to be separated from God by sin and will step in to correct a friend so that their friend can restore a right relationship with God. When you correct someone, you need to do it with the love of Christ. Never correct someone as a way to get back at them or to prove your righteousness. Before correcting someone, pray that God will help you find the right words to say.

Very lovingly, Jane explained to her friend, Emma, how her clothing choices did not reflect the dignity of her as a person created in God’s image. Jane explained to Emma how she could better reflect our Lord by dressing modestly.
2. **Instruct the Ignorant**

To instruct the ignorant, or uninformed, means to teach them something they don't know. We cannot all be priests or teachers reaching great numbers of people at a time, but we can instruct those around us in our Faith just by talking about it and living it out. By listening carefully and studying your *Family Formation* lessons, you will have a good foundation to teach others about God and His Church.

Daniel used a Show-and-Tell time at school to share his family’s favorite Advent traditions. Many of his fellow students had never even heard of Advent before.

3. **Counsel the Doubtful**

In your life, you might encounter people who doubt there is a God, or at least a God who personally loves them. People of any age can come to a point that they question God’s love, His Church, or His Commandments. You can share with them God’s plan for salvation.

When a friend from work was struggling with his faith, Michael shared his testimony of how God had worked in his life. Now, Michael’s friend turns to him often for advice on problems, and Michael is happy to give him good Christian counsel.

When a friend in school was doubting the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, Isaac was able to help his friend by asking him to share time in adoration and by showing him where, in the Gospel, Jesus tells us that the bread and wine become His Body and Blood.
4. **Comfort the Sorrowful**

There may be many reasons why a person may be sorrowful or sad. Perhaps someone is ill or has died. It could be they are having a personal crisis or family problems. Reaching out to someone who is sad with a hug or kind words is like letting them know that Jesus is with them to carry them through their difficult time. You can be the hands and heart of Jesus!

Seven-year-old Emily’s grandmother had recently undergone surgery. Grandma was unhappy about how long it was taking for her to recover. Emily was able to comfort her by sending cards and calling to let her grandmother know she was loved and that someone was thinking about her.

5. **Bear Wrongs Patiently**

This is probably the hardest Spiritual Work of Mercy. It is in our nature to complain when things don’t go our way, but God wants us to work at being patient:

- *even when* someone seems incapable of being kind to us,
- *even when* we are wrongly accused of something,
- *even when* we have suffered an injustice.

Be patient! Keep your eyes on the eternal reward.

Dominic had a classmate who always seemed to be picking on him. He continued to show kindness to this classmate. Over time, Dominic was able to see how his classmate was really in need of a friend, and he continued to offer sacrifices for him.
Forgive All Injuries

To forgive someone who has wronged us is a very difficult thing, but it is exactly what Jesus asks us to do. In Matthew 18:21-22, when Peter asks Jesus how many times he must forgive his brother, Jesus replies, "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times." If you fail to forgive, you let hatred seep into your heart, and that hatred will only grow larger and become a heavy burden to bear.

After some time in family prayer, Matthew was able to offer up his little sister's pestering. He was able to be more patient with her. Now, he willingly offers some of his time to play with Annie.

Pray for the Living and the Dead

The most powerful way in which we can help someone is through prayer. We can reach out to God on behalf of any soul on earth or in purgatory through our prayers. Our prayers to God aid those that need our help, and they benefit us as well!

Daily family prayer time, that included intercessions for people who were struggling with situations and for those who had died, helped the Wilkinson family share their love for Jesus with others. It also helped them take their focus off of their own family's difficulties, allowing them to praise God more.
ACTIVITY (for Older Saints): Journey Through the Works of Mercy

Saint Paul practiced and preached the Spiritual Works of Mercy from the time of his conversion until his death. Traveling all over the Mediterranean, he reflected on Jesus in his words and deeds.

Instructions:
1. Cut out the seven Paul cards.
2. Look up the Scripture reference on each card.
3. Decide which of the Spiritual Works of Mercy the Scripture reference best describes, and write it on the bottom of the card.
4. Glue each card onto the map near the area that corresponds to the Scripture reference (either where Paul was working or the location of the people to whom he was addressing his message).

Answers Please note: Some of the Scripture passages could describe more than one Spiritual Work of Mercy. However, after working through all of them, the seven final answers should be:
- Galatians 3:1-3 - Admonish the Sinner (Galatia)
- Acts 17:22-34 - Instruct the Ignorant (Athens)
- 2 Timothy 4:16-18 - Forgive All Injuries (Rome)
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 - Comfort the Sorrowful - (Thessalonica)
- Ephesians 3:14-19 - Pray for the Living and the Dead - (Ephesus)
- Colossians 1:24 - Bear Wrongs Patiently—(Colossae)
- 1 Corinthians 15:12-28 - Counsel the Doubtful—(Corinth)

Taking it further:
- Find out how Paul was martyred. Which Spiritual Work of Mercy was he practicing right up to the end of his life?
- Look up some saints to determine which Spiritual Works of Mercy they demonstrated during their lives.

ACTIVITY (for the whole family): Working at Mercy

Parents: Have each family member decide on one Spiritual Work of Mercy they will work on during the next month. At the end of the month, have each family member share what happened in their particular situation. It is especially important for you, as parents, to demonstrate how these are not just things we do as children, but the Spiritual Works of Mercy are an important part of our daily Christian walk.
What Did You Learn About The Spiritual Works of Mercy?
for younger saints

For each sentence below, write the letter of the Spiritual Work of Mercy that best describes the example given.

A. Admonish the sinner.
B. Instruct the ignorant.
C. Counsel the doubtful.
D. Comfort the sorrowful.
E. Bear wrongs patiently.
F. Forgive all injuries.
G. Pray for the living and the dead.

1. _____ You forgive your brother for name-calling.
2. _____ You help a friend see how going to confession can restore our relationship with God.
3. _____ You call a friend, whose family has been arguing, to cheer her up.
4. _____ You pray for the victims of a natural disaster.
5. _____ You help a friend see why the Church teaches that attending Sunday Mass is critical to our faith.
6. _____ You don’t complain when your sister gets to pick the video for your family to watch.
7. _____ You explain that skipping Mass to go to a party is a mortal sin.
8. _____ You remind a friend that Christ lives in all of us, and He loves us for who we are.
9. _____ You use a conversation about famous people to teach someone about your patron saint.
10. _____ You pray for your brother whose friend has hurt him.

Recite your memory verse.
(See front cover.)
What Did You Learn About

The Spiritual Works of Mercy?

for older saints

List the seven Spiritual Works of Mercy and give an example of each.

1. Example:

2. Example:

3. Example:

4. Example:

5. Example:

6. Example:

7. Example:

Recite your memory assignment. (See inside front cover.)