



## H. Embracing the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy

God's mercy is not only meant to be received with trust: it is also to be shared through love. The practice of the works of mercy, both spiritual and corporal, is the goal and fruit of devotion to Divine Mercy, as well as a Gospel command: "Be merciful even as your Father is merciful" (Lk. 6:36).

God expects us to let His mercy flow through us to others. His words to St. Faustina are unmistakably clear: "I demand from you deeds of mercy, which are to arise out of love for Me. You are to show mercy to your neighbors always and everywhere" (*Diary*, 742). We can never forget that when we stand before the Lord on Judgment Day, He will ask us what we have done for the least of our brothers and sisters.

There are so many situations and people that call out for help. They allow us to be merciful and in doing so we obtain God's mercy, for as Jesus proclaimed, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Mt. 5:7). The Church teaches the way to carry out this task is through Works of Mercy:

### The Corporal Works of Mercy

1. Feed the hungry
2. Give drink to the thirsty
3. Clothe the naked
4. Shelter the homeless
5. Comfort the imprisoned
6. Visit the sick
7. Bury the dead

### The Spiritual Works of Mercy

1. Admonish sinners
2. Instruct the unformed
3. Counsel the doubtful
4. Comfort the sorrowful
5. Be patient with those in error
6. Forgive offenses
7. Pray for the living and the dead

One of the greatest works of mercy we can perform is to pray for the dying. For St. Faustina, this was an important aspect of her mission of mercy. "Oh, dying souls are in such need of prayer," St. Faustina wrote in her *Diary*. "O Jesus, inspire souls to pray often for the dying" (1015).

The Lord Himself impressed upon her the importance of such prayers when He said to her: "Pray as much as you can for the dying. By your entreaties, obtain for them trust in My mercy, because they have most need of trust, and have it the least. Be assured that the grace of eternal salvation for certain souls in their final moments depends on your prayer" (1777).

In particular, Jesus recommended to St. Faustina to use the Chaplet to aid the dying: "At the hour of their death, I defend as My own glory every soul that will say this Chaplet; or when others say it for a dying person, the indulgence [pardon] is the same" (811). When we pray for



the dying in this way, we can be assured that it opens the floodgates of Divine Mercy for souls in their time of greatest weakness and greatest need: “God’s mercy sometimes touches the sinner at the last moment in a wondrous and mysterious way. Outwardly, it seems as if everything were lost, but it is not so. The soul, illumined by a ray of God’s powerful final grace, turns to God in the last moment with such a power of love that, in an instant, it receives from God forgiveness of sin and punishment” (1698).

The following prayer from the *Diary of St. Faustina* (entry 163) gives us a true measure of our mercy.

O Most Holy Trinity! As many times as I breathe, as many times as my heart beats, as many times as my blood pulsates through my body, so many thousand times do I want to glorify Your mercy.

I want to be completely transformed into Your mercy and to be Your living reflection, O Lord. May the greatest of all divine attributes, that of Your unfathomable mercy, pass through my heart and soul to my neighbor.

Help me, O Lord, that my eyes may be merciful, so that I may never suspect or judge from appearances, but look for what is beautiful in my neighbors’ souls and come to their rescue.

Help me, that my ears may be merciful, so that I may give heed to my neighbors’ needs and not be indifferent to their pains and moanings.

Help me, O Lord, that my tongue may be merciful, so that I should never speak negatively of my neighbor, but have a word of comfort and forgiveness for all.

Help me, O Lord, that my hands may be merciful and filled with good deeds, so that I may do only good to my neighbors and take upon myself the more difficult and toilsome tasks.

Help me, that my feet may be merciful, so that I may hurry to assist my neighbor, overcoming my own fatigue and weariness. My true rest is in the service of my neighbor.

Help me, O Lord, that my heart may be merciful so that I myself may feel all the sufferings of my neighbor. I will refuse my heart to no one. I will be sincere even with those who, I know, will abuse my kindness. And I will lock myself up in the most merciful Heart of Jesus. I will bear my own suffering in silence. May Your mercy, O Lord, rest upon me.

You Yourself command me to exercise the three degrees of mercy. The first: the act of mercy, of whatever kind. The second: the word of mercy — if I cannot carry out a work of mercy, I will assist by my words. The third: prayer — if I cannot show mercy by deeds or words, I can always do so by prayer. My prayer reaches out even there where I cannot reach out physically. O my Jesus, transform me into Yourself, for You can do all things.