



February 2017

Dear St. John's Families,  
May the Lord give you His peace!

### **Rediscovering the Corporal Works of Mercy**



**Jesus' words in Matthew 25 are not about *us* at all -- but about our neighbors.**

The seven Corporal Works of Mercy are a part of Catholic tradition and for many of us; these were part of our upbringing. In today's world we often get too busy to give them much thought, yet they are rooted in one of

the most beloved gospels, Matthew 25:31 - 46, the Last Judgment parable: "When I was hungry, you gave me to eat."

In this powerful scripture, Jesus gives us our "marching orders" as Christians – this is what we are to do if we are his followers. His words are not about how we are to pray or dress or how often or even where to go to Church. As a matter of fact, his words are not about *us* at all – but about our neighbors.

#### **Based on the Gospel**

The Corporal Works of Mercy are based in this gospel, the one in which Jesus identifies himself squarely with the poor and marginalized: Whatever you did for one of these least brothers and sisters of mine, you did for *me*. Jesus' message to us: I have loved you and given myself for you. Follow my example and love the way I have loved you.

What we are called to today – in the midst of our modern world and busy lives - is to look beyond our own busy-ness and pay attention to those around us who are in need.

What does it mean to "feed" someone – and what does it mean to be hungry? Sometimes it might be direct support through a food pantry. Don't know where that is? If my grocery store has a "food bank" cart, I can drop off a few cans of soup each time I shop. I can pay special attention to and support food-raising events at school, churches and other community places. I can also volunteer at food banks to stock shelves or fill orders.

More face-to-face, we can offer to serve meals at a soup kitchen or shelter and offer kindness and dignity to people who have come for food. We might also start a parish or congregation

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food donation program, with monthly donations taken to a local food pantry.

Who else in our lives is “hungry”? We might offer hospitality to those who are lonely, or to newcomers in the neighborhood or at church.

Here’s a prayer for the hungry;

Sharing the loaves and fishes,  
You gave us an image of solidarity with the hungry, O Lord.  
Sharing yourself in the Bread and Wine,  
You called all to the table, O Lord.  
Give me the hunger to be a part of the feeding  
And the healing of this world.  
Nourish me with your Grace,  
So I may work with joy to serve your children.  
Open my eyes and my heart  
To recognize those in poverty  
And increase my awareness  
Of the structures and systems  
That need to be changed  
So we may all break bread together.  
In your name we pray for the end of hunger.  
Amen.



Sincerely yours,

Edward J. Higgins  
Principal

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