

January 1, 2016 is designated as World Day of Peace. In speaking on this day, Pope Francis instructs us that “Indifference and lack of commitment constitute a grave dereliction of the duty whereby each of us must work in accordance with our abilities and our role in society for the promotion of the common good, and in particular for peace, which is one of mankind’s most precious goods.” (Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the celebration of the XLIX World Day of Peace, w2.vatican.va)

This month take time for reflection and learn about ways you can be an “instrument of peace” in your community and in our global community. Remember, there is a trickle effect of each individual work of mercy that is performed in the name of God. World Day of Peace brings to focus several of the spiritual works of mercy...

Admonish Sinners: Stand up for what is right. Have you ever been part of a conversation where someone is speaking in a derogatory manner? Do you ever participate in gossip? Have you ever had a hateful thought? Don’t be afraid to speak up for what is right and don’t be ashamed to recognize your own flaws and ask for forgiveness.

Comfort the Sorrowful: Persecution and bullying can lead to significant distress. Being able to show compassion to those in distress is a great work of mercy. Can you lend a listening ear to someone who has been rejected or bullied? Can you offer a kind word of understanding and show acceptance for how that person is feeling? We must not neglect to show compassion for suffering.

Bear Wrongs Patiently: While it is important to stand up for what is right, it is equally important to know when patience is the most effective tool. We cannot control the actions of those around us, only our own. What we can do is lead by example. We should always enter into encounters with others with patience. This can be the difference between fueling and extinguishing a fire.

Forgive Offenses: “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us” Take time to reflect on these words of the “Lord’s Prayer”. Forgiveness lifts a burden from our hearts and souls.

Pray for the Living and the Dead: Prayer is a way for everyone to contribute. There are many things in this world that are beyond our own individual abilities to resolve. Praying for guidance, wisdom, comfort and healing for ourselves and all members of our human family may have a greater impact than any other single action we can perform. Prayer is likely the most powerful work of mercy.

The calendar on the reverse offers suggestions for how you can focus your attention during this month. **Share your experiences on our facebook page at [facebook.com/worksofmercy](https://www.facebook.com/worksofmercy)** The mission of the Works of Mercy Initiative derives directly from the heart of Catholic tradition: the works of mercy...The Works of Mercy Initiative aims to identify those who are most in need and connect them with others to experience Christ’s healing touch. In comforting the afflicted, we pray all will find their path to salvation.