

## Make Your Own Workshop

There are endless ways we can all Live the Works of Mercy. While we have offered some suggested projects, we also encourage you to create your own. Below are some thoughts we have compiled from various online sources about living the works of mercy during the COVID-19 pandemic...and beyond.

**Feed the hungry:** We can still feed the hungry—whether they be first responders, people whose jobs are defined as essential, an isolated neighbor, or friend with a newborn. Send them a meal, cook one and make a contactless delivery, or give someone a gift certificate to a local restaurant. Feeding the hungry can also include donating to food pantries, becoming a Meals on Wheels volunteer, or preparing food with love for your own family.

**Give drink to the thirsty:** Donate bottled water, sports drinks, Pedialyte, and the like to the food bank.

**Clothe the naked:** Stuck at home? How about using some of this time go through your closet and simplify? Donate extra clothing items to charity or buy items online to contribute to different ministries or homeless shelters.

**Shelter the homeless:** Consider donating to initiatives that are taking measures to quarantine and relieve the suffering of the homeless who fall ill. Donate sanitary items – sanitizer, bleach, soap, etc. – to your local shelter.

**Visit the sick and imprisoned:** While we cannot physically visit the sick or imprisoned, we can still write and send them cards. Homemade cards and hand-written notes can go a long way in giving another a sense of hope or alleviating loneliness. For those with loved ones in nursing homes, use this time to call on the phone or try a video chat.

**Bury the dead:** Visit a cemetery and pray for the souls in Purgatory. Send cards to those who have recently lost a loved one. Arrange for Masses said for those who have died. Masses are still being celebrated even if we cannot attend.

**Instruct the ignorant:** Some of us may be tackling home schooling for the first-time or teaching relatives the ins-and-outs of a Zoom call, but instructing the ignorant entails more than academics and technology. How are we showing our friends, family, or neighbors how to turn to God in times of distress? How can we model a life of prayer, faith, and perseverance during times of suffering? We can instruct the ignorant by witnessing to faith that perseveres and sharing the Gospel through relevant conversations on suffering and the faithfulness of God.

**Counsel the doubtful:** In times of hardship, many ask how a good and loving God can allow suffering. Many are experiencing a crisis of faith. Give friends and family a call and check in with loved ones. Share things you are grateful for or how you see God's hand continuing to work during this time. Turn to Scripture and other resources—be they talks, podcasts, or videos—that build up your faith and share these resources with friends and family.

**Bear wrongs patiently:** Many of us are facing incredibly stressful work and family life situations. Being stuck at home with family members or roommates can give us plenty of opportunities to practice patience with others. How can we take a deep breath and give others the benefit of the doubt right now? Even staying at home may feel like a wrong we are called to bear. Is there a virtue we are being called to grow in during this time? Ask God for the strength to take each day moment by moment with grace.

**Forgive offenses willingly:** Living under stressful conditions often causes us to be irritable or moody. We are all facing something completely new that has disrupted our lives and routines. When stuck at home, we may find it's easy to have more confrontation with those we are living with simply because we are seeing them and interacting more often. When Peter asked Jesus how often we are called to forgive, his answer was "seventy-seven" – signifying a limitless amount "Father, forgive them," to have the same spirit of compassion and forgiveness for our friends, neighbors, or leaders during this difficult time.

**Comfort the afflicted:** Many people are disheartened, grieving, and confused right now. We can comfort the sorrowful by checking in with friends and family, writing letters, making phone calls, sending gifts, or making them a meal or treat. We can also share hope, encouragement, or words of positivity. Most importantly, we can offer prayers for those grieving and let them know we are carrying them in our hearts.

**Pray for the living and the dead:** prayer is one of the most powerful actions we can take each day, but especially throughout this time of suffering. Many people are feeling isolated, lonely, and scared as a result of the coronavirus and its implications. As Catholics, we know we are one body with many parts. When one part suffers, the body suffers. Let us offer up prayers for those who are sick, suffering, without a job, or unable to see friends and family. Let us also remember the dead and dying in our prayers. We can keep them in our prayer intentions, pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet, offer a Rosary, or unite our actions with the salvific work of Christ for the salvation of the world.