

# Corporal Works of Mercy



## Reflections for Family & Home Lent 2021

A resource prepared by the Atlantic Liturgical Commission, 2021

“The Christian life involves the practice of the traditional seven corporal and seven spiritual works of mercy. We usually think of the works of mercy individually and in relation to a specific initiative: hospitals for the sick, soup kitchens for the hungry, shelters for the homeless, schools for those to be educated, the confessional and spiritual direction for those needing counsel and forgiveness... But if we look at the works of mercy as a whole, we see that the object of mercy is human life itself and everything it embraces.”  
- Pope Francis, Message for the celebration of the *World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation*, 1 September 2016

These reflections are offered in the hope that, as we journey through our Lenten season still affected by Covid-19 Pandemic restrictions, those who pray through these words and actions may be more fully linked to our Eucharistic communities. While we are, in many cases, unable to join with our parish communities in person, the grace and mission of the Eucharist calls, strengthens and missions us to build up the Body of Christ by prayer, fasting and alms-giving. The reflections below are but one way to aid us as we have an imposed “fast” on our gathered worship, that we continue to pray with and for our brothers and sisters in Christ, and offer service (alms-giving) through the Corporal Works of Mercy: Feed the Hungry, Give Drink to the Thirsty, Clothe the Naked, Welcome the Stranger (Welcome the Homeless), Visit the Sick, Visit the Imprisoned and Bury the Dead.

“The Christian life involves the practice of the traditional seven corporal and seven spiritual works of mercy. ‘We usually think of the works of mercy individually and in relation to a specific initiative: hospitals for the sick, soup kitchens for the hungry, shelters for the homeless, schools for those to be educated, the confessional and spiritual direction for those needing counsel and forgiveness... But if we look at the works of mercy as a whole, we see that the object of mercy is human life itself and everything it embraces.’”  
With these words, Pope Francis in his 2016 *World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation* introduced an eighth Corporal Work of Mercy: care for the earth. The rituals provided in this document focus on the traditional seven Corporal Works of Mercy, but the Atlantic Liturgical Conference is working to prepare a similar document that will focus entirely on “care for the earth.

Each reflection provided here follows the same order each week. You are invited, if possible, to use these rituals on Sundays as you gather with those in your household or “bubble”. Resources to help you are provided (web links to music, reflections, etc.). We invite you to set up a dedicated prayer space in your home, if possible, (please see the following YouTube video for some ideas: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1a6r-A45ZQ>), modifying to your own circumstance.

Some suggestions for your prayer space:

- Table or shelf with purple cloth - ideally where it can stay throughout Lent
- Candle. (*If possible, we encourage you to use your Baptismal Candle for the central candle in your prayer space, reminding us in a concrete way that we are called “children of God” who are to always walk as “children of the Light.”*)
- Bible with Book Mark
- Crucifix

- Objects from nature - possibly one from each member, especially children. (The task of selecting an item from nature in Winter connects us to the barren aspect of the earth. It also reminds us that great life is brewing just below the surface ready to return).

The music, readings, reflections and prayers are provided for you and you may wish simply to use, for example, the YouTube link for the hymn, but if you are able to sing yourselves then that is encouraged. We invite you to use these rituals in ways that work best for you and your situations. That we gather to pray and act is the most important thing.

**For each Sunday the Order of Service is as follows:**

- Begin with a short time of quiet
- Light the Candle in your Prayer Space
- Scripture: Matthew 25: 31-40
- Short period of silent reflection
- Reflection — provided for each week to be read or watched
- Short Period of Silent Reflection
- Intercession Prayers
- Our Father
- Commitment for Action related to each of the Corporal Works of Mercy
- Closing Prayer

## First Sunday of Lent: *Feed The Hungry*



**Gather in Silence** at Prayer Space

**Light the Candle** (Your Baptism Candle if possible)

**Add Symbol** for the Day to Prayer Space: Bread

**Hymn:** *Whatever You Do* (Composed by American Roman Catholic priest, teacher, playwright, folk-composer and author Willard F Jabusch (1930-2018) in 1965 for a youth Mass in Chicago, Illinois (USA) where Jabusch was working.

Lyrics & Guitar Chords:

<https://chords-and-tabs.net/song/name/misc-traditional-whatever-you-do>

Two versions of *Whatever You Do*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYozCOLUiFY>

**Reading: Matthew 25:31-40**

### **\*\*A reading from the Gospel of Matthew**

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

**The Gospel of the Lord**

**Brief Silence**

**Reflection:** Optional Reflection may be found at:  
<http://jubileeofmercy-eb.org/page/reflection-feed-hungry/>

“Feed the Hungry” challenges us to protect daily nutrition for all – for today and for all future generations. Too many people in our world, in our own towns and cities, go to bed hungry every night. In 2015, the global community adopted 17 global goals for Sustainable Development by 2030. Goal 2 called for a Zero Hunger World.

And our souls hunger as well; for recognition, for respect, for love. This past summer, having lost my husband of nearly 60 years, I moved into the heart of the old city of St. John’s. There, surrounded by wonderful churches, colourful ‘jelly bean row’ houses (and truly daunting hills), I walked for miles with my small dog and constant companion, Posy. Amidst the beauty and history of the city I came to recognize the faces of many people living on the streets...mostly men. I would stop and chat for a minute or so – they’d pat Posy – I’d offer them money for a coffee and they were always grateful. I think that they and I were mostly grateful for the connection. Our souls were being fed.

Pope Francis, in his encyclical, *Laudato Si*, speaks of giving thanks before and after meals. This “...reminds us of our dependence on God for life; it strengthens our feeling of gratitude for the gifts of creation...it reaffirms our solidarity with those in greatest need”.  
FAO LINK

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For more info you may want to check out this wonderful link written by Cardinal Peter K.A. Turkson, President, Pontifical Council of Justice & Peace  
<http://www.faithfoodenvironment.org/2014-symposium/laudato-si-and-the-vocation-of-agriculture/>

Patty Fowler,  
Archdiocese of St. John’s, Nfld

### **Brief Silence:**

### **Intercessions:**

- For strength and courage in this pandemic as we rediscover our sacred bond with the earth
- For an increasing awareness of who is in need, at home and afar and what action we can take.
- For world and church leaders seeking inspiration for the sharing of earth’s resources

**Our Father:** Our Father,  
who art in heaven  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
one earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And deliver us from evil.  
For yours in the kingdom, the power and the glory  
forever and ever. AMEN.

**Commitment to Action:** Some options for our mission to “Feed the Hungry”

- If possible set aside one food item per day or per week for the local food bank, or for a family in need.
- Bake or cook something to make someone happy; a neighbour, a senior, a single mom or a school friend having a hard time.
- Do not allow food waste in your home all week

**Closing Prayer:** Good and gracious God, the journey of Lent invites us to repair and restore relationships with God, self, others and creation. Keep us faithful to these Lenten practices.

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## Second Sunday of Lent: *Give Water to the Thirsty*



**Gather** in Silence at Prayer Space

**Light** the Candle (Your Baptism Candle if possible)

**Add Symbol for the Day to Prayer Space:**  
Glass of Water

**Hymn:** *Whatever You Do* (Composed by American Roman Catholic priest, teacher, playwright, folk-composer and author Willard F Jabusch (1930-2018) in 1965 for a youth Mass in Chicago, Illinois (USA) where Jabusch was working.

Lyrics & Guitar Chords:

<https://chords-and-tabs.net/song/name/misc-traditional-whatever-you-do>

Two versions of *Whatever You Do*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYozCOLUiFY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3aYp9VtoFCA&feature=youtu.be>

**Reading:** Matthew 25:31-40

### **\*\*A reading from the Gospel of Matthew**

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

**The Gospel of the Lord**



## Brief Silence

**Reflection:** Optional Reflection may be found at:  
<http://jubileeofmercy-eb.org/page/reflection-drink-thirst/>

A common experience: how refreshing a cold drink of water can be when we are parched from work or play on a hot summer's day! Nothing else refreshes and satisfies. Our bodies, made up of 60% water, crave it to satisfy our thirsts. For many it abounds freely, and for so many more in our world, including some places within our own country, fresh water becomes even more precious as its supply is inadequate, unsanitary or polluted.

As we thirst for fresh water to meet our daily needs for cleanliness and refreshment, indeed life itself, there is an even deeper thirst within us that cries out to be slaked. It is our deep thirst for God. Psalmist cries out, "O God . . . my soul thirst for you" (Psalm 63). Jesus, in meeting the Samaritan woman at the community well in the heat of the scorching day, asks her for a drink of water. In this encounter, begun with addressing this most basic of human need with basic human kindness, and a gesture of profound mercy to one in need, Jesus invites her (and us) into a deeper well of God's mercy and love for us. Jesus recognized that while he may have had this physical thirst, her life was parched from so much pain and struggle that could only be quenched by the love he was offering.

In our Gospel today, Jesus is inviting us to once again look at this simple and merciful offering of basic offering of a cool drink of water to those among us who thirst? Do we turn a deaf ear to the parched cries of those who simply have no clean water?! Do we recognize the many profound thirsts of our neighbours: thirst for justice, thirst for hope, a thirst to be heard, a thirst so powerful from carrying their own cross in life that they too cry out with Jesus' own words from the Cross, "I thirst". And do we recognize **our** thirst for the life-giving, soul satisfying water that only Jesus offers? When we have been drenched in this living water then we will be impelled to offer a cool drink of that water to the arid lives of those who long for living water.

A friend has this uncredited saying on his wall:

*Mercy is a gift from the heart of God that requires nothing of the soul, except that it turn to Holy One to be tended and loved and fortified and strengthened and made whole by the sweetness and kindness of God's grace.*

Let it be so for us.

Fr. Conrad Edwards,  
Diocese of Antigonish

**Brief Silence:**



**Intercessions:**

- For all who thirst for holiness and justice:  
We pray to the Lord
- For all deprived of clean drinking water, especially First Nations' Communities in Canada:  
We pray to the Lord
- For a deeper commitment to sustaining the dignity of each person in promoting access to clean water:  
We pray to the Lord
- For all terminally ill people to receive adequate hydration:  
We pray to the Lord
- For all experiencing desert times in their lives to hear Jesus' words, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink."  
We pray to the Lord.

**Our Father:** Our Father,  
who art in heaven  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
one earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And deliver us from evil.  
For yours in the kingdom, the power and the glory  
forever and ever. AMEN.

- **Commitment to Action:** Some options for our mission to "Give Water to the Thirsty"  
Reduce your water consumption – check your water bill and amount saved by reducing consumption donate to Development & Peace <https://www.devp.org>
- Support your local water utility by reducing consumption of bottled water.
- Pay for coffee for person behind you at your favourite coffee shop.

**Closing Prayer:** Good and gracious God, the journey of Lent invites us to repair and restore relationships with God, self, others and creation. Keep us faithful to these Lenten practices.

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## Third Sunday of Lent: *Clothe the Naked*



**Gather** in Silence at Prayer Space

**Light** the Candle (Your Baptism Candle if possible)

**Add Symbol for the Day to Prayer Space:** Blue Jeans

Blue jeans became popular after the second world war, after a time of such great suffering jeans became a daily social symbol of happier times.

Jeans are also a great social equalizer because the

are worn by people of every economic status. They are affordable, practical, and often look better with age!

**Hymn:** *Whatever You Do* (Composed by American Roman Catholic priest, teacher, playwright, folk-composer and author Willard F Jabusch (1930-2018) in 1965 for a youth Mass in Chicago, Illinois (USA) where Jabusch was working.

Lyrics & Guitar Chords:

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Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

**The Gospel of the Lord**

## **Brief Silence**

**Reflection:** Optional Reflection may be found at:

<http://jubileeofmercy-eb.org/page/reflection-clothe-naked/>

Everyone in the world needs clothes for warmth, protection, and modesty. Clothing keeps us warm in the elements, protects us as we are working, and gives us modesty to express our dignity. All people are God's children and are made in God's image and likeness. That means that all people are lovable and beautiful because God is both love and beauty. We are invited by Jesus, God's divine Son and our brother, to care for and honour each other as children of God. As brothers and sisters, we are supposed to look out for each other. Clothing is more than fashion. Without suitable clothing people are vulnerable to illness, injury, and abuse. With suitable clothing people are more likely to be healthy, secure, and respected. Having enough clothing to live well is important but hoarding more clothing than we need is selfish. Using clothing to express our personalities is fun but mocking others for how they dress is cruel. When Jesus died on the cross, he was naked because his clothes were stolen, but when his family buried him, they wrapped his body in cloth. They did this because they loved him. We too can love Jesus and each other by helping all people have enough good clothes to wear.

Fr. Craig Cameron,  
Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth

## **Brief Silence**

### **Intercessions**

- For those who are cold because they do not have enough warm clothes this winter:  
We pray to the Lord.
- For those who need protective gear so that they can find adequate work:  
We pray to the Lord.
- For those who are mocked because of how they dress:  
We pray to the Lord.

**Our Father:** Our Father,  
who art in heaven  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And deliver us from evil.  
For yours in the kingdom, the power and the glory  
forever and ever. AMEN.

**Action:**

- Donate socks to shelters in your community, especially during the winter months.
- If you have more clothes that you need, give some to the needy.
- Care for your clothes by storing them in a respectful and neat manner... clean up those closets!

**Prayer**

Heavenly Father, thank you for making us to be your children and thank you for making all people family. Make us grateful for what we have and help us to care for others. Send us your Holy Spirit to inspire us to take good care of our clothing and to share what we have with anyone who is in need. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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## Fourth Sunday of Lent: *Shelter the Homeless*



**Gather** in Silence at Prayer Space

**Light** the Candle (Your Baptism Candle if possible)

**Add Symbol for the Day to Prayer Space:** A picture of a lily or simple cross.

**Hymn:** *Whatsoever You Do* (Composed by American Roman Catholic priest, teacher, playwright, folk-composer and author Willard F Jabusch (1930-2018) in 1965 for a youth Mass in Chicago, Illinois (USA) where Jabusch was working.

Lyrics & Guitar Chords:

<https://chords-and-tabs.net/song/name/misc-traditional-whatsoever-you-do>

Two versions of *Whatsoever You Do*:

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**Reading:** Matthew 25:31-40

### **\*\*A reading from the Gospel of Matthew**

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

**The Gospel of the Lord**

## Brief Silence

**Reflection:** **Optional Reflection may be found at:**

<http://jubileeofmercy-eb.org/page/reflection-shelter-homeless/>

*The Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head*" (Mt 8:20). Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, was born in a borrowed manger, had no fixed address once he began his public ministry, and was buried in another man's grave. It is quite an irony: the God who made the universe became a homeless person.

In our present reality we see and hear of many persons who, through no fault of their own, find themselves in heart-rending dilemmas of asking 'how in the world can I find a place of shelter and safety for my family or for myself?' The loss of jobs, loss of income, issues of health and socialized stigma has become burdens for literally thousands of families in our regions. Such experiences of loss impact all family members, parents and children. Children suffer incredible stress when they do not have food for breakfast, lunch and supper. No one can learn when they lack nourishment. They suffer socially when lack of clothing and a lack of a secure address prevent them from attending school. We must walk in their shoes and try to imagine how we would respond to such stress each day.

This corporal work of mercy forces us to open our eyes to the misery of those who, for a variety of reasons, have no place they can call home. We are called as Christians to walk the talk and to be a voice, a hand and a person who reaches out to embrace and accompany our sisters and brother in their search to find a place of shelter and a home for their children.

Faith communities and our Catholic communities are responding to the Gospel call to provide shelter for the homeless. These initiatives deserve our financial support and, if possible, our volunteer efforts. Along with providing a temporary roof over their heads, we need to help those homeless who are able to do so to get back on their feet and accompany them on the difficult path that leads to the dignity of being able to afford a place to stay. This can involve helping with job skills or offering employment. Whenever possible, we should give a hand up as well as a handout. We should also encourage efforts to provide for affordable housing in our local communities that often struggle with high real estate prices.

Even as we grapple as a society and Church with the overarching challenge of homelessness, there still are those poor individuals we encounter every day who, like the Son of Man, have nowhere to lay their head. Some of them suffer from serious mental illness and require the help of any but those with professional training. But a kind word, and some spare change, can brighten their day. As with the other works of mercy, sheltering the homeless requires discernment and the stewardship of our resources. Yet when in doubt, it is better to err on the side of charity.

This work of mercy also invites to ask ourselves how hospitable we are. Do we make of our home a place where guests feel welcome and cherished? Do we create an



environment where those who are not literally homeless but feel adrift and isolated find a welcome? St. Theresa reminds us that we are the hands, the voice and the heart of Christ to each person we meet, especially to those most in need of mercy, compassion and a place of security where we find shelter.

Margie Gillis,  
Diocese of Antigonish

## **Brief Silence**

### **Intercessions:**

- For the grace to be generous in serving your people and untiring in caring for our most vulnerable neighbours:  
We pray to the Lord
- For eyes to see and hearts to respond to the needs of all who lack homes and places of welcome:  
We pray to the Lord
- For our global leaders: that they may create policies that ensure that families will be able to find affordable places to live and material resources to assist in maintain health and well-being for all:  
We pray to the Lord
- For a commitment to support the works of St. Vincent de Paul societies and community services for our suffering families:  
We pray to the Lord

**Our Father:** Our Father,  
who art in heaven  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
one earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And deliver us from evil.  
For yours in the kingdom, the power and the glory  
forever and ever. AMEN.

**Commitment to Action:** Some options for our mission to “Visit the Imprisoned”

- Befriend the poor and treat them as you wish to be treated.
- Visit and offer support to homeless shelters in your area
- Provide assistance to those needing home repairs, snow removal
- Educate parishioners on the needs of families to furnish homes and offer assistance when requested

**Closing Prayer:** Good and gracious God, the journey of Lent invites us to repair and restore relationships with God, self, others and creation. Keep us faithful to these Lenten practices.

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## Fifth Sunday of Lent: *Visit the Sick*



**Gather** in Silence at Prayer Space

**Light** the Candle (Your Baptism Candle if possible)

**Add Symbol for the Day to Prayer Space:**

Thermometer, or package of Band Aids, or First Aid kit or anything used in, or that reminds us of, care for the sick.

**Hymn:** *Whatever You Do* (Composed by American Roman Catholic priest, teacher, playwright, folk-composer and author Willard F Jabusch (1930-2018) in 1965 for a youth Mass in Chicago, Illinois (USA) where Jabusch was working.

Lyrics & Guitar Chords:

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When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

**The Gospel of the Lord**

## Brief Silence

**Reflection:** Optional Reflection may be found at:  
<http://jubileeofmercy-eb.org/page/reflection-visit-sick/>

*I was sick and you took care of me...When, Lord, was it that we saw you sick...and took care of you? I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.*

Of the many with whom Jesus interacted as he walked the dusty footpaths of Galilee, there were none more numerous or closer to his heart than the sick. Remember some of them. In a recent Sunday gospel, Peter's mother-in-law, and the huge crowd that gathered around the house where she lay in bed. The woman with the hemorrhage is another one. Jairus' daughter, the group afflicted with leprosy, the man born blind, and the man who was deaf and had a speech impediment are others that come to mind. Encountering Jesus, being cared for by him, radically transformed their lives.

Our baptism calls and empowers us to be like Jesus. The Church, guided by the Spirit, continues in our own time and place the work he has begun. An important part of our mission is care for the sick. Doctors and nurses and social workers and all kinds of other professionals and support staff have their roles to play. So do we.

What happens when we get sick? We may have a fever, a cough, chills, upset stomach. We're sleepy. Symptoms vary from mild to serious. Some illnesses linger for a long time. Some even threaten our lives. COVID-19 has shown us that.

Sickness affects us in more than physical ways. This is particularly so when illness is severe or long-lasting. It isolates us. Forced to spend time alone for more than a little while, we begin to worry. It's easy, when we're sick, to become preoccupied with ourselves. We notice every twinge, expecting the worst, and feeling vulnerable. We may fear people have forgotten about us. Especially if sickness is serious, we may become sad and discouraged. Life is going on all around us, and we're not participating in it. Maybe, we get resentful or angry.

When we take care of the sick, we help them in all kinds of ways. Our visits—or our attention to someone in our own home, who is ill—let them know they haven't been forgotten, that people miss them, and look forward to having them back in their company. We assure them their dignity and value aren't diminished by illness. We help them look beyond themselves to the wider world. With that, they're better able to regain perspective. The gospel reading helps us to know that there's even more going on, something much deeper. It begins with a simple human connection, an outreach of love and concern. It's often the case with our faith that something we consider ordinary—like a visit or a chat or a phone call or a text message or a bowl of chicken soup—is much more. Something like Jesus, himself. "Is this not the carpenter's son?" they asked. "Can anything good come from

Nazareth?" some wondered. All the while, the carpenter/preacher from the wrong side of the tracks, who appeared so ordinary, was the Son of God.

Finding the Extraordinary God in ordinary living is our privilege and challenge. The gospel tells us that when we care for an ailing brother or sister with a visit, a call, an advocacy on their behalf, we encounter Jesus, the Christ, our brother and Lord. When we love the sister or brother we can see, we show our love for the God hidden from our sight and living in them. We enrich their lives, and in turn, they deepen our living. In the depths of our graced humanity, God abides. Through our care for the sick in our midst, we receive our hundredfold promised by the Lord. The entire encounter becomes "a holy exchange of gifts" between visitor and visited. Everyone is lifted up. The new creation is made manifest. Salvation is close at hand. The reign of God has come near. All of that from a simple, ordinary outreach of loving care.

Fr. Keith Kennific  
Diocese of Charlottetown

## **Brief Silence**

### **Intercessions:**

- For the Church, showing forth the healing presence of the Saviour:  
We pray to the Lord
- For the sick and for their families, struggling with weakness and seeking hope:  
We pray to the Lord
- For care givers, reaching out in compassion:  
We pray to the Lord:
- For medical researchers, pursuing the true good of humankind:  
We pray to the Lord:
- For public health officials, serving all of us in this time of pandemic:  
We pray to the Lord...

**Our Father:** Our Father,  
who art in heaven  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
one earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And deliver us from evil.  
For yours in the kingdom, the power and the glory  
forever and ever. AMEN.

**Commitment to Action:** Some options for our mission to “Visit the sick”

- Share some thoughts about the gospel reading and/or the reflection.
- Were you ever sick? What did others do that made you feel loved and cared for?
- Make a family card; send it to someone you know who is sick or shut-in; or have a Zoom get-together with them.
- Talk about the importance, if we visit, of observing the sick person’s schedule, and being respectful of their privacy.
- Pray for sick people you know and for those who are sick and alone.
- Learn more about healthcare in a country where people don’t have hospitals and doctors and nurses like we do in Canada.
- Consider ways to protect the health of others.
- Choose a way to make healthy choices this week: exercise, more fruit and vegetables, less screen time, etc.

**Closing Prayer:** Good and gracious God, the journey of Lent invites us to repair and restore relationships with God, self, others and creation. Keep us faithful to these Lenten practices.

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## Sixth Sunday of Lent: *Visit the Imprisoned*



**Gather** in Silence at Prayer Space

**Light** the Candle (Your Baptism Candle if possible)

**Add Symbol for the Day to Prayer Space:** Piece of Barbed Wire or Gavel.

**Hymn:** *Whatsoever You Do* (Composed by American Roman Catholic priest, teacher, playwright, folk-composer and author Willard F Jabusch (1930-2018) in 1965 for a youth Mass in Chicago, Illinois (USA) where Jabusch was working.

Lyrics & Guitar Chords:

<https://chords-and-tabs.net/song/name/misc-traditional-whatsoever-you-do>

Two versions of *Whatsoever You Do*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYozCOLUiFY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3aYp9VtoFCA&feature=youtu.be>

**Reading:** Matthew 25:31-40

### **\*\*A reading from the Gospel of Matthew**

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

**The Gospel of the Lord**



## Brief Silence

**Reflection:** Optional Reflection may be found at:  
<http://jubileeofmercy-eb.org/page/reflection-visit-prisoners/>

Looking back a few years, I find myself in a place and situation that I had not ever dreamed of. As a Deacon Chaplain I visit and minister to men and women in prison, to those suffering in hospitals and other institutions and this service has now become a blessing in my life. Matthew's Gospel speaking about the Corporal Works of Mercy have become my "go to" scripture passages, and my strength. Reflecting back I realize, my mind and heart are filled with memories and experiences that have moulded me into quite a different person. This ministry has transformed me.

Yes, God is calling all of us to be transformed by giving food to the hungry, welcoming the stranger, tending to the sick, giving drink to the thirsty and yes visiting those in prison. But Jesus is speaking to these actions also in a much broader sense as well. There are many forms of imprisonment in our society even today. There are of course, those who are in prison or correctional facilities. But Jesus' words remind us of those imprisoned when they face mental and physical abuse at home, the ones suffering from mental illness and feel imprisoned by society, those whose addictions imprison them, and the lonely who feel incarcerated in their own homes, especially during this pandemic. There are many in our midst who feel imprisoned. Just as physical bars and walls keep us locked in, fears, anxiety, depression and hopelessness are all prisons that hold us captive, keeping us from feeling the love of God. The Lord had compassion for those imprisoned by invisible walls as well as those imprisoned by real walls.

Jesus calls us to action. Our Gospel constantly calls us to journey, as a people, without the exclusion or rejection of anyone. No one is to be left behind, discarded or forgotten. Being merciful, being close to those who suffer, means getting our feet and hands dirty. And that is ok because we imitate our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Being unafraid to reach out with compassion to those who are "in the muck" and whose pain and imprisonment make them cry out, we begin to live like Jesus and live in Jesus. We become gradually transformed into men and women of deeper goodness, compassion and love, builders of God's kingdom.

In these few years of Chaplaincy ministry I have learned that those to whom we reach out are the greatest of teachers, teachers of what matters: about love and lost love, compassion and lack of compassion, loneliness, fear and the gift of companionship. During this Lenten season and especially this this week, let us partake more fully in our actions and so live our mission as Christians by taking up our cross and following Jesus. Believe me if you do this you too will be transformed as I was. May God Bless you all.

Deacon Lorne MacNeil  
Diocese of Antigonish.

## Brief Silence

### Intercessions:

- For the church and all its ministers, called to hear and act on God's word:  
We pray to the Lord.
- For openness to the Spirit of Jesus making us aware of the needs of others:  
We pray to the Lord
- For the courage to encounter places and situations with which we may feel uncomfortable  
We pray to the Lord
- For all who suffer the inequalities of our world's structures and for those imprisoned and cut off from society in any way.  
We pray to the Lord

**Our Father:** Our Father,  
who art in heaven  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
one earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And deliver us from evil.  
For yours in the kingdom, the power and the glory  
forever and ever. AMEN.

### Commitment to Action: Some options for our mission to "Visit the Imprisoned"

- Make a commitment to give yourself to others who are suffering .
- Ask God for words of encouragement, compassion, and love to carry out this mission.
- Sign up for prison ministry and volunteer your time

**Closing Prayer:** Good and gracious God, the journey of Lent invites us to repair and restore relationships with God, self, others and creation. Keep us faithful to these Lenten practices.

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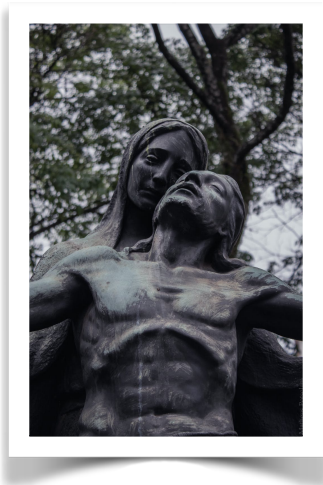
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## Seventh Sunday of Lent: *Bury the Dead*



**Gather** in Silence at Prayer Space

**Light** the Candle (Your Baptism Candle if possible)

**Add Symbol for the Day to Prayer Space:** A picture of a lily or simple cross.

**Hymn:** *Whatsoever You Do* (Composed by American Roman Catholic priest, teacher, playwright, folk-composer and author Willard F Jabusch (1930-2018) in 1965 for a youth Mass in Chicago, Illinois (USA) where Jabusch was working.

Lyrics & Guitar Chords:

<https://chords-and-tabs.net/song/name/misc-traditional-whatsoever-you-do>

Two versions of *Whatsoever You Do*:

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3aYp9VtoFCA&feature=youtu.be>

**Reading:** Matthew 25:31-40

### **\*\*A reading from the Gospel of Matthew**

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

**The Gospel of the Lord**

## Brief Silence

**Reflection:** Optional Reflection may be found at:

<http://jubileeofmercy-eb.org/page/reflection-bury-dead/>

In all of human experience nothing is more commonplace and universal than death. In its often wrenching grief it sends us seeking a corner in which to hide, and yet, paradoxically, at the same time it drives us to seek a community in which to find solace and meaning. In the reality of today's society, that community can be the small tight knit circle of family and friends, or it can include a large gathering of neighbours, acquaintances and colleagues. The funeral rites can be simple and relatively private celebrations or they can be more elaborate and public, and, in these days of instant communication, they can be witnessed all over the world. But whatever form they take they all have one thing in common, namely the need to ritualize our grief and our search for meaning.

In the wonderful musical play *Les Miserables* there is a powerful line which says, "There is a grief that can't be spoken." There are things we cannot put into words when we are grieving. It is then that we need the richness and power of liturgical and ritual language, that ensemble of gestures, music, candles, incense, silence, and above all an assembly of the community of faith. It is this ritual language that can bring us in touch with the deep mystery of life, death and beyond. The ritual uses words but it takes us beyond words.

There is a grief that can't be spoken, but there is also a faith that can't be spoken. It can however be expressed and experienced when we gather to pray. This action of prayer is one of the most important actions of compassion and love we can offer those grieving the death of one who has died.

Fr. Bill Burke  
Diocese of Antigonish

## Brief Silence

### Intercessions:

- For those who have died during the pandemic and particularly for their families unable to gather because of the health restrictions:  
We pray to the Lord
- For those near death today and their families, that when they are afraid and lonely they may know the comfort and strength of our prayers for them:  
We pray to the Lord
- Let us pray for the members of our family who have died (take time to name them):  
We pray to the Lord.

Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace and may their memory be a blessing for us.

**Our Father:** Our Father,  
who art in heaven  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
one earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And deliver us from evil.  
For yours in the kingdom, the power and the glory  
forever and ever. AMEN.

**Commitment to Action:** Some options for our mission to “Visit the Imprisoned”

- Think of close friends who have died.
- Prepare an Easter card proclaiming the Resurrection of Christ and send it to the family at Easter.

**Closing Prayer:** Good and gracious God, the journey of Lent invites us to repair and restore relationships with God, self, others and creation. Keep us faithful to these Lenten practices.

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