

Care of Creation in the Holy Year of Mercy

BY LYNETTE BALLARD,
SENIOR DIRECTOR, LEARNING INTEGRATION, THE CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION, ST. LOUIS.

LEADER: Cardinal Peter Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, gave a Lenten lecture at Villanova University on Feb. 26, 2016. He asked, “What are the works of mercy, and how does care of creation belong to them?”

Let us name the Corporal Works of Mercy:
To feed the hungry,

RESPONSE: Especially those who suffer from poverty and drought.

LEADER: To give drink to the thirsty,

RESPONSE: Especially those who lack clean, abundant water.

LEADER: To clothe the naked,

RESPONSE: Especially those exposed to the cold of winter and the sting of indifference.

LEADER: To give shelter to the homeless,

RESPONSE: Especially victims of war, storms and rising seas.

LEADER: To care for the sick,

RESPONSE: Especially those who have been poisoned by the wastes of our industries.

LEADER: To ransom the captive,

RESPONSE: Especially those oppressed by cruel economic and political systems, or from addictions to the pleasures of the world.

LEADER: To protect the dignity of the human person,

RESPONSE: Especially in reverently burying the dead.

LEADER: To care for our common home.

RESPONSE: Lord, help us to be merciful stewards of the gift of creation.

LEADER: Let us name the Spiritual Works of Mercy:

To teach those who do not see

RESPONSE: How their lifestyles harm others.

LEADER: To offer hope to those in despair

RESPONSE: For the future of loved ones or the future of the world.

LEADER: To admonish those who sin

RESPONSE: Against neighbors, the natural order or the laws of nature.

LEADER: To patiently bear suffering

RESPONSE: Inflicted by gluttony and greed.

LEADER: To willingly forgive offenses

RESPONSE: Committed against humanity and the goodness of creation.

LEADER: To comfort those afflicted

RESPONSE: By corruption, by changes to our climate and by unwholesome desires.

LEADER: To pray for the living and the dead,

RESPONSE: And to pray for the well-being of future generations.

LEADER: To care for our common home.

RESPONSE: Lord, help us to be merciful stewards of the gift of creation.

READER: (*From the statement of Pope Francis in establishing 2016 as the Holy Year of Mercy.*)

“It is my burning desire that, during this Jubilee, the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. It will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty. And let us enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God’s mercy. Jesus introduces us to these works of mercy in his preaching so that we can know whether or not we are living as his disciples.”

CLOSING PRAYER

ALL: God of creation, strengthen our relationships with you, with our neighbors and with the earth itself, for when one of these relationships is broken, the others are broken too. Help us to embrace all creation as a loving gift from you who enfolds us, and all things, with your affection. Amen.

“Prayer Service,” a regular department in *Health Progress*, may be copied without prior permission.