

For this year's Annual Appeal, we will try something a bit different

Rather than show the video the diocese has put together

I am going to speak about the appeal

If you would like to take a look at the video

It will be linked to our parish and diocesan web sites

As many of you know, Pope Francis is coming to the United States

He has stated he is coming as a *Missionary of Mercy*

**This goes hand in hand with his declaring a Jubilee Year of Mercy
beginning Dec 8 (every 25 or 50 yrs, year of forgiveness)**

It will run through the following Christ the King celebration

**This Jubilee Year will be a year Pope Francis would like God's
mercy to take center stage in our lives**

This message has been central to his entire pontificate

This is the backdrop for many of his recent statements

Including those on abortion and annulments

**The Diocese of La Crosse will be participating in this Year of
Mercy as well**

Beginning with the annual appeal

Mercy is the central theme

In your appeal letters this week

And on the diocesan video

Bishop Callahan speaks about works of mercy

They have identified 38 specific works of mercy in our diocese

All of these are supported through the annual appeal

These works of mercy are accomplished in our families

In our places of work

In our schools

In our parishes and in our cities

To help us understand this a bit better, let's explore mercy:

It is easy to see physical poverty

This is the realm of the corporal works of mercy

But spiritual poverty is even more serious

Because we cannot see this with our eyes

But we do see the effects it has in our world

There are 7 Spiritual works of Mercy

And 7 corporal Works of Mercy

The spiritual works of mercy can be traced to apostolic times

They recognize sin and other human conditions

That keep us from fully loving and serving God.

When we recognize these conditions in others

We are called to reach out in faith and in love

So that we might draw them closer to Christ.

The spiritual works of mercy are:

A) To instruct the ignorant or uninformed

Parents are the first teachers of their children

It is not the CCD teacher or the school teacher

We reinforce what the parents teach by living faith filled lives

B) To admonish sinners

This is what Sr Faustina of Divine Mercy calls 'Tough Love'

To call out in love when we find a brother or sister in sin

This is a difficult thing to do

And is often not immediately successful

But to name a sin for what it is

To challenge others to leave this behind

This takes prudence in selecting the time and the words

But leaving a loved one in sin is not love

C) To bear wrongs patiently

Patience is a difficult virtue to attain

And just when we think we have it

We blow our top and have to start all over

Patience is the fruit of prayer and practice

Often I think a good place to practice patience is with ourselves

Then we can offer it to others

D) To forgive offences willingly,

An eye for an eye; and a tooth for a tooth, right?

No, forgive not 7 times

But 70 times 7 times

When we have been offended or hurt

It is easy to slander and attack those that hurt us

It is merciful to forgive

To forgive does not equate forget

To forgive frees us to love

E) To comfort the afflicted, and to counsel the doubtful

These are related to each other

Not to give empty words

But to have a relationship with the Holy Spirit

And listen to others

To walk with them through their struggles

F) To pray for the living and the dead

To pray for those in purgatory

To offer Masses for the faithful departed

To pray for our family and friends

To pray for our enemies

Bringing the whole world to the merciful heart of Christ

These are the spiritual works of mercy

These works of mercy have to become concretized in our lives

Expressed through the good things we do as Christians

**As these are easier to see, I will offer some examples how these
are supported by the annual appeal**

A) The first two; to feed the hungry and give water to the thirsty

Food pantries and soup kitchens throughout the diocese

The parish in Neillsville goes to Africa and digs wells for communities

Our young people in their mission trips have dug water lines

They have served food to the homeless

Project milk and project seed

B) Next, to cloth the naked and shelter the homeless

Coats for kids

Offering supplies when a family suffers a fire or floods

To rebuild communities after natural disasters

**These are some of the things our young people have done as
well in mission trips**

Serving those within the boundaries of our diocese

And reaching out to others in need, wherever it might be

Sending clothing to the orphans in Peru and Bolivia

C) Then visit the sick and those in prison

Throughout the diocese are various prison ministries

There are hospitals run by Catholic religious orders

There are homebound ministries

We now have a Catholic hospice program in our diocese

There are hospital ministries and prayer groups

D) Lastly, to bury the dead

This is a local ministry of each parish

A funeral is for the family

But it is also a corporal work of mercy

You do not need to know the person to go to the funeral Mass

To pray for the repose of their soul

All of these recognize the sacredness of human life

They remind us that we are not on an island

We are our brother's keeper

St Thomas calls the works of mercy a form of almsgiving

A way of giving back in gratitude for what we have received

This is one way we fulfill our obligations to each other

In our own community

Throughout our diocese

And throughout the world

Supporting these works of charity

In these ways and in so many more

The diocesan appeal is a work of mercy

These past 6 years

You have responded so generously here in PdC

First as St John and St Gabriel

Then as Holy Family parish

But we have accomplished this with only around 40% participation

I would ask you to please pray over the appeal request being made

Some may not be able to meet the request

But I believe everyone is able to offer something

And if it is simply impossible to offer financial assistance this year

Please fill out the card and mark the prayers section

The first weekend of October will be our 'AMEN' Sunday

The day we will ask that you return your forms to the church

Please pray over this and talk about it among your family

**Your generosity will touch the hearts of many people in need of
God's mercy**

Praying in the words of St Faustina:

Jesus, I trust you

God bless