



CELEBRATING THE YEAR OF MERCY

PRAYING THE CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

VISIT THE SICK

OPENING PRAYER

O God, who willed that our infirmities be borne by your only begotten son to show the value of human suffering, listen to our prayers for our brothers and sisters who are sick; grant them the grace to offer their pain in union with Christ. We ask this through the same Christ, our Lord. Amen.

READ Luke 17:11-19

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 91:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 9-10

R./ God has put his angels in charge of you, to guard you in all your ways.

You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shade of the Almighty, say to the Lord, "My refuge and fortress, my God in whom I trust."

R./

He will rescue you from the fowler's snare, from the destroying plague, he will shelter you with his pinions, and under his wings you may take refuge.

R./

You shall not fear the terror of the night nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that roams in darkness, nor the plague that ravages at noon.

R./

Because you have the Lord for your refuge and have made the Most High your stronghold, no evil shall befall you, no affliction come near your tent.

R./

INTERCESSIONS

That the Church may continue the care and outreach to the sick that so clearly marked the ministry of Jesus, we pray to the Lord.

That all nations will make sure that adequate health care is available for all their constituents, particularly those who cannot afford medical insurance, we pray to the Lord.

That each of us may serve with compassion our friends and neighbors who are sick, as opportunities arise, we pray to the Lord.

That those who are dealing with illness of any kind may, with God's grace, offer their suffering in union with Christ's, we pray to the Lord.

That all who have passed through the gates of death may find their hope fulfilled in the life of heaven, we pray to the Lord.

Our Father...

CLOSING PRAYER

Pope Francis' Prayer for the Jubilee Year of Mercy (excerpt)

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father, and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him.

Let the Church be your visible face in the world.

Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind.

We ask this of you, Lord Jesus, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

REFLECTION BY JOANNA GARDNER

Social Ministries Communicator, Catholic Charities Diocese of Camden

Bill's problem was not that he was physically sick; the problem was that he was angry. Very angry. So angry that it was making him physically sick.

Everything seemed to happen at once. First, he found himself amid heart-wrenching divorce proceedings, which left him reeling from feelings of shock and betrayal. Then he had a knee replaced and the recovery didn't go well; he was in constant pain. Six months later, the other knee had to be replaced. He went from weighing 220 to 160 pounds. Friends approached him, but he wasn't ready to talk. Even his pastor expressed concern. Bill was 62. "I was probably as low as I had ever been in my life," he said.

Then came the miracle. Bill connected with Catholic Charities Diocese of Camden's (CCC) counseling program. He began meeting regularly with counselor Rod Herrera – at first every week, then every two weeks, then once a month. Slowly Bill's anger gave way to peace. "When I left after a year, it was bittersweet, because it meant losing that closeness;

being able to talk to somebody and him just listen," he said. "But it was good in that I knew I was in a much better place. If it wasn't for Rod and Catholic Charities I wouldn't be where I am right now."

CCC's outpatient counseling programs include one-on-one sessions for adults, family therapy, couples counseling, and group sessions. "We see the client as a whole person who has an underlying condition which needs attention," said Sylvia Loumeau, director of CCC's counseling programs. "We are there with them, attempting to help them figure out how to heal from whatever trauma or experience they have had."

In the four years since he ended counseling, Bill has taken a "180" degree turn in his life. "I finally got rid of that anger," he said. He began attending a group for divorced Catholics that helped him continue the healing process. He also started attending Mass every day and was invited to be an altar server by his priest. Bill had never served before, even though all his brothers had. He laughs now, thinking of how he became an altar server at 66 years old. "All that's happened to me has happened because of a reason; that's how I have to look at it," he said. "Serving Mass is sort of a way of paying back for everything that has been done for me."

SPIRITUAL WORK OF MERCY: FORGIVE OFFENSES

To "forgive offenses" is obvious in meaning, but difficult in practice. The ministry of Jesus could be said to center on the reconciliation of sinners, and he told his followers that they must be ready to forgive too. To forgive someone might be difficult because it can seem that the wrongdoer is cheating justice. Forgiveness doesn't preclude justice, but it is a way to meet an injustice with mercy. Also, the one who forgives is freed from carrying the burden of anger.

QUOTE OF MERCY

"The greatest disease in the West today is not TB or leprosy; it is being unwanted, unloved, and uncared for. We can cure physical diseases with medicine, but the only cure for loneliness, despair, and hopelessness is love."

— Mother Teresa



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2050 Ballenger Avenue
Suite 400
Alexandria, VA 22314

www.CatholicCharitiesUSA.org

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