



ACT

IMPACT

PUTTING MERCY INTO ACTION

*A SPECIAL INITIATIVE in celebration of the 40TH ANNIVERSARY
of the DIOCESE of METUCHEN*

Prepared by the **DIOCESE OF METUCHEN'S FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE**
The **ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE of METUCHEN**



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LETTER *from* BISHOP JAMES F. CHECCHIO



My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Each year during Lent, we focus in an intentional way on turning away from sin and instead turning our hearts over more fully to the Lord. In these 40 days of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, we are indeed met with challenges, yet it is through these challenges that we are able to grow even closer to our Heavenly Father.

As we mark the start of our 40-day Lenten journey – in this same year that we are celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of the Diocese of Metuchen – I cannot help but be reminded of our diocese’s own 40-year journey. Our diocese certainly has been blessed in these past 40 years, but we have had our share of challenges too. Gratefully, these challenges have led us to cling more closely to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and His Blessed Mother.

This Lenten season, I am asking all the faithful in our diocese to commit to doing 40 works of mercy. We have over 630,000 Catholics in the Diocese of Metuchen, so if each one could commit to doing 40 works of mercy, together we will have fulfilled over 25 million works of mercy. Can you imagine what a blessing that would be to our local Church and what a witness that would be to our local communities! What a wonderful way to celebrate our anniversary and give thanks to God!

Through these 40 works of mercy, throughout these 40 days of our Lenten journey, and in this celebratory year marking 40 years of our diocese, my hope and prayer is that we will turn our hearts over more fully to one another and, most importantly, to the Lord. Please know of my love and prayers for you and your families and I ask that you please pray for me too. May this Lenten season be for us a time of grace and provide for us a moment of encounter with the Lord and each other. Blessed Lent!

With renewed best wishes, I remain

Yours in Christ,

+ James F. Checchio

Most Reverend James F. Checchio, JCD, MBA
Bishop of Metuchen

INTRODUCTION

In his pastoral letter on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Diocese of Metuchen, “*Answering the Lord’s Call Through Prayer, Works of Mercy and Vocations*,” Bishop James F. Checchio reminds us of our call as disciples to act in the name of Jesus, reproducing the love shown by Him in our own lives.

“Each day, we are provided with opportunities to serve others, though some are more formal than others.... I urge you to pray and to consider how God’s gracious love and mercy has impacted your own life, and then go out and do the same for others,” wrote Bishop Checchio. “How many lives are changed by our individual acts of mercy each day! The world needs the touch of Jesus – He touches the lives of those around us, through each of us, each day.”

So, during these 40 days of Lent and in the coming Easter season, all the faithful in the Diocese of Metuchen are being asked to consider: “How might I share God’s gracious love and mercy through my actions today?”









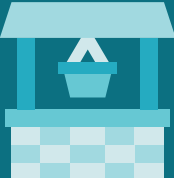





In celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of the Diocese of Metuchen, we invite you to make a commitment – a commitment to doing 40 works of mercy, a commitment to serving one another with the same love and mercy bestowed on us by the Father, and a commitment to the Lord to witness to His great love in the four beautiful counties of the Diocese of Metuchen.

The pages that follow detail the works of mercy and practical ways to put mercy into action, and also include a commitment form, to serve as a physical reminder of our commitment as Catholics serving one another in His name, graphics that can be downloaded and used on social media and digital platforms, and bulletin announcements to promote the campaign.

For more information about the
FORTY ACT IMPACT CAMPAIGN
visit: diometuchen.org/worksofmercy

SPIRITUAL WORKS *of Mercy*

The **SPIRITUAL WORKS** *of Mercy* have long been a part of the Christian tradition, appearing in the works of theologians and spiritual writers throughout history. Just as Jesus attended to the spiritual well-being of those He ministered to, these Spiritual Works of Mercy guide us to “help our neighbor in their spiritual needs” (USCCA).

 <p>INSTRUCT <i>the UNINFORMED</i></p>	 <p>COUNSEL <i>the DOUBTFUL</i></p>	 <p>ADMONISH SINNERS</p>	 <p>FORGIVE OFFENSES</p>
 <p>COMFORT <i>the SORROWFUL</i></p>	 <p>BEAR WRONGS PATIENTLY</p>	 <p>PRAY <i>for the LIVING</i> <i>and the DEAD</i></p>	 <p>FEED <i>the HUNGRY</i></p>
 <p>GIVE DRINK <i>to the THIRSTY</i></p>	 <p>CLOTHE <i>the NAKED</i></p>	 <p>SHELTER <i>the HOMELESS</i></p>	 <p>COMFORT <i>the SICK</i></p>
 <p>VISIT <i>those</i> <i>in PRISON</i></p>	 <p>BURY <i>the DEAD</i></p>	<p>#FORTYACTIMPACT <i>Tell us about your FORTY ACT IMPACT</i> visit: diometuchen.org/worksofmercy and fill out the commitment form, and tag your photos and stories.</p>	

The **CORPORAL WORKS** *of Mercy* are found in the teachings of Jesus and give us a model for how we should treat all others, as if they were Christ in disguise. They “are charitable actions by which we help our neighbors in their bodily needs” (USCCA). They respond to the basic needs of humanity as we journey together through this life.

CORPORAL WORKS *of Mercy*

PUTTING MERCY INTO ACTION, *One Act at a Time*

Below are suggested ways we can enact the works of mercy in our everyday lives. Through these simple acts, we can more ardently live our command to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love others as ourselves:



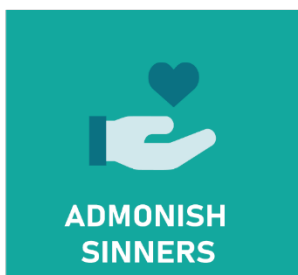
Instruct the Uninformed

- Commit to learning more about our Catholic faith and share your understanding of the faith with others
- Share your knowledge, experience, insight and skills with others, including family, friends, fellow students, and coworkers
- Respond to negative and prejudicial comments with positive statements
- Do not participate in and put an end to gossip by correcting statements if you indeed have the facts, or by walking away
- Set a good example for others, through your actions and words
- Offer to help someone with something they do not know
- Volunteer to serve as a catechist at your parish
- Consider becoming a RCIA sponsor or Godparent
- Lend a good book or share a helpful article in a friendly way



Counsel the Doubtful

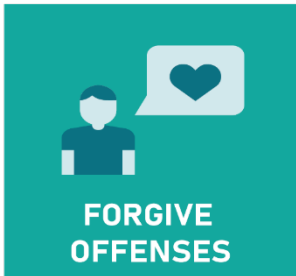
- Provide positive feedback to encourage and build confidence in another person
- Have a compassionate heart and a listening ear when someone comes to you to vent their feelings or share a problem
- Say a prayer for those in need of counsel or guidance, asking the Lord to set them on the right path
- Respond to cynicism, skepticism, and doubt with hope
- Ask others about their hopes and support them in trying to attain them
- Work at being optimistic and avoiding cynicism
- Express empathy and attempt to view the world through another person's eyes before responding
- Offer a new perspective, alternative, encouragement and prayers to those who need it
- Refer those in need to professional help when needed, encouraging people to contact a priest when in spiritual crisis, a doctor when in physical crisis or a counselor when in mental crisis.



Admonish Sinners

- Offer to bring a friend, family member or fellow parishioner to receive the sacrament of reconciliation
- Set a good example for others by being an authentic witness of Christian joy and love.
- Remind others that the choices they make – good or bad – do not only affect them, but can affect many others around them

- Love others enough to be honest and truthful with them, in a kind way
- Be mindful of your own need for repentance and conversion before admonishing anyone else
- Pray first that you may hear the voice of God and follow it faithfully
- Pray that others will find the courage to turn away from their sins
- Show that you care about others by providing them with the truth of God

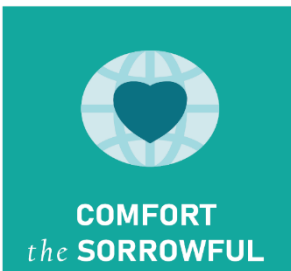


Forgive Offenses

- Extend forgiveness to those who have hurt you
- Ask forgiveness from others
- Call or write to an estranged friend or family member
- Give someone a second, third or fourth chance, even if you may feel it is unwarranted
- Reflect on your own humility and place yourself in other people's shoes
- Cultivate a forgiving heart through a devotion to the Sacred Heart

of Jesus

- Teach forgiveness to others, especially the children in your life or those in your parish
- Recognize your own need for mercy and receive it freely from Jesus, so it becomes easier to forgive the offenses of others

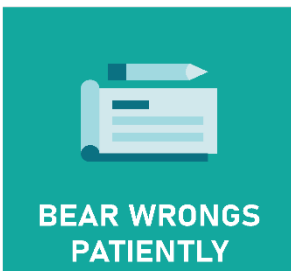


Comfort the Sorrowful

- Visit a friend or family member who is having a difficult time
- Send someone a sympathy card or care package
- On an anniversary of a friend or family member's miscarriage or loss of a child or spouse, remember them by calling, emailing or sending them a card
- Offer words of encouragement to those who seem discouraged
- Walk with others through their pain
- Be present to those who are struggling or in emotional pain or

disrepair

- Give comfort to and care to those with sick loved ones
- Attend wakes and funerals as a show of support



Bear Wrongs Patiently

- Strive to give others the benefit of the doubt
- Pray to God for His help in carrying serious wrongs
- Practice with little acts of patience so that you are prone to be patient when the bigger upsets of life come your way
- Seek to be less critical yourself
- "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Mt 5:44)
- Be mindful of the things that make you impatient
- Before responding impatiently, take a deep breath and allow

yourself to walk away

- Put small annoyances into perspective and find the positives of the situation

- When waiting, use your unexpected extra time wisely by saying a brief prayer or praying the rosary



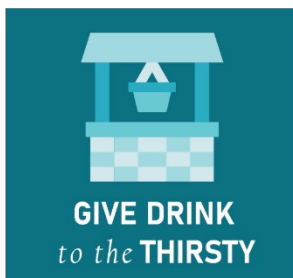
Pray for the Living and the Dead

- Keep a prayer list of intentions and list those you know are sick and pray for them every day
- Pray for those people who are listed in your parish bulletin
- Each day, pray for our seminarians, our bishop, our priests, our deacons and our religious brothers and sisters
- When you hear sirens, pray for the safety of others
- Knit, crochet or sew a prayer blanket or craft a rosary that can be given to some person who could find comfort and solace in the fact that someone else is praying for them
- Say a family rosary together with the intentions of all those in need
- Pray a Divine Mercy chaplet for those who will return to the Lord today
- Visit your local cemetery or one of our parochial or diocesan cemeteries to pray for the souls of the departed



Feed the Hungry

- Support and volunteer at a local food pantry, soup kitchen, or agency that helps to feed the hungry
- Learn about global hunger and act in solidarity by participating in Catholic Relief Services' Rice Bowl campaign
- Avoid wasting food
- Keep some granola bars on hand or make a few sandwiches to hand out as you walk through areas where you might encounter people in need
- Give to or host a food drive
- Print a list of local food banks and soup kitchens to hand out as you encounter people in need
- Share food with a friend, relative or co-worker
- Prepare and take a meal to someone in your community who is seriously ill or welcoming a child
- Help ensure proper nutrition for your loved ones
- Go grocery shopping for someone who cannot go to the store themselves



Give Drink to the Thirsty

- Pass out water bottles to people in need
- Bring a bottle or glass of water to a neighbor working in your neighborhood
- Donate baby formula to a local pregnancy aid center
- Have a "donations only" lemonade stand and donate the funds to our local Catholic Charities or to Catholic Relief Services
- Watch for ways to save on water and to keep it clean
- Learn more about the issue of water by reading Pope Francis' Encyclical, *Laudato Si' (Praise be to you)*
- Pay for the coffee of the person behind you at a coffee shop

- Keep your fellow parishioners hydrated by offering to bring bottled water to those volunteering at a parish event
- Volunteer to hand out water to those participating in a local charity race or walk



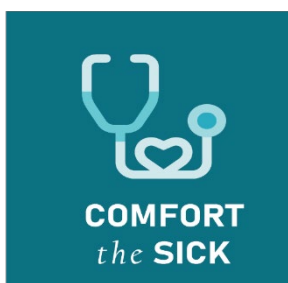
Clothe the Naked

- Go through your drawers and closets and donate those clothes or shoes that are still in good condition to agencies who support those in need
- Volunteer at a local clothing drive or volunteer to staff a local thrift store, such as Catholic Charities' thrift store in Phillipsburg which generates funds to help operate the Warren Basic Material Needs Program
- Knit, crochet, or sew baby blankets for your local pregnancy aid center
- Distribute warm winter clothes, such as jackets, sweaters, scarves, and hats to those in need
- Buy new socks and underwear and donate them to a local shelter
- Host a clothing drive and donate the items to those in need
- Ensure your loved ones have clothes that are clean and in good condition
- Offer to launder vestments and albs for your parish
- Reduce waste by offering to repair clothing for those in your local community



Shelter the Homeless

- Let your house be a welcoming place for your friends and loved ones
- Send cards or gift cards to a local homeless shelter
- Adopt a family in need through Catholic Charities
- Hold a garage sale with some of your unused items and donate the proceeds to Catholic Charities or your local shelter
- Print a list of local homeless shelters to hand out as you encounter people in need
- Help a family working towards adoption by hosting a fundraiser for them
- Offer to assist a neighbor with home repairs
- Advocate for public policies and legislation that support housing people in need
- Refer job opportunities you see to your local homeless shelter



Comfort the Sick

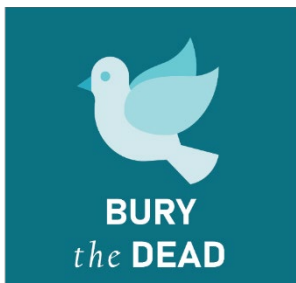
- Visit or call the homebound, hospitalized or those in assisted living or nursing homes
- Serve as a Eucharistic minister to the homebound
- Make or send cards to those who are hospitalized, homebound or those in assisted living or nursing homes
- Offer to help a homebound loved one, friend or parishioner with household chores, such as shoveling snow or grocery shopping
- Coordinate with your local senior center or nursing home to donate any extra medical supplies or equipment that is in good condition and able to be safely passed on to another person

- While interaction with patients may be limited due to Covid, offer to volunteer in some way at Saint Peter's University Hospital or at your local hospital
- Knit, crochet, or sew blankets or hats for those in treatment for cancer or other medical conditions
- Buy flowers or collect your homegrown flowers in a bouquet for display at a hospital admitting desk or in another main area
- Pray for or with those who are ill in mind, body or spirit by praying the rosary or attending a Mass of Healing
- Volunteer to drive a loved one, parishioner or community member to a doctor's appointment or to Mass



Visit those in Prison

- Donate bibles, a subscription to The Catholic Spirit, or other spiritual reading materials to those who are incarcerated
- Help to prepare a holiday meal or share gifts with a family and children of an imprisoned parent
- Pray for the families of those imprisoned and for those families affected by the actions of the imprisoned
- Consider joining an anonymous pen pal program, such as the program offered through the Order of Malta
- Learn what the Church teaches and advocates for in the area of criminal and restorative justice
- Offer to mentor an at-risk teenager
- Support job-training and educational programs designed to rehabilitate prisoners
- Act with mercy and forgiveness towards everyone, but especially those who have made mistakes in their past



Bury the Dead

- Participate in a bereavement ministry
- Send a Mass card to families of those who have died
- Spend time with and offer help to those who have lost a loved one
- Offer daily prayers for those who are terminally ill and for those who have died
- Pray at an abortion clinic for the lives lost to abortion
- Visit the cemetery and pray for the dead
- Take friends and relatives to visit the grave of a loved one
- Contact your local cemetery to offer help with spring or fall cleanup around the cemetery grounds
- Remember our veterans who have died by offering to place flags around the cemetery for Memorial Day and Veterans Day

