

CATHOLIC EDUCATION: Catholic Education PILGRIMS OF HOPE

L'éducation catholique: Pèlerins de l'espérance ~

~ March 2025 Bulletin

PILGRIMS OF HOPE ~ OUR JOURNEY THROUGH LENT

Together, we are called as Pilgrims of Hope to celebrate our Catholic faith and foster a renewed sense of hope in those around us. This month, we will highlight the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy and reflect on how we can be signs of hope by choosing acts of mercy and love in our schools, homes, and parishes. This issue will also highlight ways we can be Pilgrims of Hope as we begin the season of Lent on March 5th, and we will also highlight the Solemnity of St. Joseph on March 19th.

OUR JOURNEY AS PILGRIMS OF HOPE

This year's Catholic Education Theme, **Pilgrims of Hope**, refers to the journey of faith that we make as individuals and as a community. The Jubilee Year reminds us of God's mercy, and it is a time for us to reflect on our relationships with one another and with God and how we can show mercy to others in need.

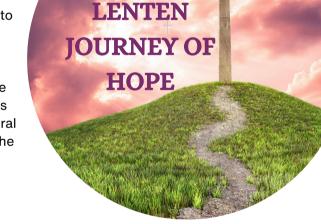
Pope Francis reminds us that during this Holy Year, "we are called to be tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind" (Spes non Confundit, 10). One way that we are signs of hope is by showing God's love to our neighbour by practicing the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. God calls us to help one another and meet the physical and spiritual needs of those who are in need.

THE CORPORAL AND SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy are acts of kindness and mercy by which we can bring hope and help to our neighbours with their everyday material and physical needs. All of us need hope, especially in our moments of greatest need. May we experience the mercy of God and share the mercy of God with one another during this Holy Year.

"I have asked the Church in this Jubilee Year to rediscover the richness encompassed by the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. The experience of mercy, indeed, becomes visible in the witness of concrete signs as Jesus himself taught us. Each time that one of the faithful personally performs one or more of these actions, he or she shall surely obtain the Jubilee Indulgence."

Pope Francis







Catholic Education

CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

Feed the hungry Give drink to the thirsty Clothe the naked Shelter the homeless Visit the sick Visit the imprisoned Bury the dead





Jesus taught his disciples: "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (Lk 6:36). It is a responsibility that challenges the conscience and actions of every Christian. In fact, it is not enough to experience God's mercy in one's life; whoever receives it must also become a sign and instrument for others. Mercy, therefore, is not only reserved for particular moments, but it embraces our entire daily existence. Pope Francis



SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

Instruct the Ignorant Counsel the doubtful Admonishing the sinners Bear wrongs patiently Forgive offences willingly Comfort the afflicted Pray for the living and the dead

*For student friendly version see GIFGIC Grade 5 Student Book (Chapter 3, p. 58)









The five sub themes for Catholic Education Week this year are anchored by our calling as Christians to love and show mercy. When we practice the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy, we demonstrate in a visible way our love for God who commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves:

> By honouring human dignity By caring for creation By responding to the poverties in our world By serving in solidarity By living as peacemakers

THE CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

In this Ordinary Jubilee Year of Hope, Pope Francis calls us to conversion in our own lives so that we can be signs of hope to the world. We can be signs of hope through acts of mercy and love. The Corporal Works of Mercy are charitable actions by which we help our neighbours in their physical or material needs (Corporal comes from the Latin word for "body").

The Corporal Works of Mercy are found in the teachings of Jesus, and they give us a model for how we should treat others, as if they were Christ in disguise. The Corporal Works of Mercy are based on the following Scripture from the Gospel of Matthew.

"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.'" Matthew 25. 35-40





CATHOLIC EDUCATION: TOGETHER IN FAITH

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The seven Corporal Works of Mercy are listed below. After each work of mercy there are suggestions and words of advice for living them out in our daily lives. Remember, each one of us has the opportunity to live them out in daily in our lives.

How you can you live out each of these Corporal Works of Mercy in your own family, school, parish, and wider community?

FEED THE HUNGRY

There are many people in this world who go without food or proper nourishment. When so much of our food goes to waste, consider how good stewardship practices of your own food habits can benefit others who do not have those same resources.

- Donate to your school/parish Lenten food drive.
- Research, identify and donate money or your time and talents to organizations that serve the hungry.
- Try not to purchase more food than you are able to eat to eliminate waste.
- Donate money to your parish's Saint Vincent de Paul Society or a local hunger organization.

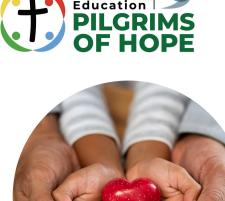
GIVE DRINK TO THE THIRSTY

Many of our neighbours, locally and globally, do not have access to clean water and suffer from the lack of this basic necessity. We should support the efforts of those working towards greater accessibility of this essential resource.

- Educate yourself about the lack of clean, drinkable water in many Indigenous communities in Canada.
- Make an effort not to waste water. Remembering to turn off the water faucet when you are brushing your teeth or washing dishes can help, especially in regions suffering from drought.

CLOTHE THE NAKED

- Go through your closet and donate clothes that you have outgrown or do not wear anymore.
- Find a charity that is meaningful to you and volunteer your time or donate.
- Care for those who may feel rejected, alone, and forgotten. They too can feel "naked," without friends, family or meaningful relationships.
- Support the work of the St. Vincent de Paul Society.



Catholic







SHELTER THE HOMELESS

There are many circumstances that could lead to someone becoming a person without a home. Jesus encourages us to go out and meet those without homes, affirming their worth and helping them seek a resolution to the challenges they face. This may seem like a big commitment, but it could be something as small as offering to pray together with a friend who is struggling or open your home to a lonely friend or neighbour who needs help.

- See if your parish or diocese is involved with a local homeless shelter or soup kitchen and volunteer your time.
- Donate time or money to organizations that build homes for those who need shelter.
- Many homeless shelters need warm blankets for their beds. If you can knit or sew that would be a loving gift.
- Help neighbours care for their homes and do repairs.

TO CARE FOR THE SICK

Those who are sick are often forgotten or avoided. In spite of their illness, these individuals still have much to offer to those who take the time to visit and comfort them. Someone does not need to be in poor health to be considered "sick." We can have spiritual illness as well.

- Be there for your friends and family, not just physically, but emotionally and spiritually.
- Consider donating blood.
- Spend quality time with those who are sick or homebound.
- Take the time to call, send a card or an e-mail to someone who is sick.
- Spend time volunteering at a nursing home or a hospital.
- Take time on the weekend to stop and visit with an elderly neighbour.
- Give caregivers time off from their caregiving responsibilities so they can rest or enjoy a relaxing break.

TO HELP THE IMPRISONED

Helping those who are imprisoned has to do with more than just visiting them. We should we see and help those who are imprisoned by a variety of walls. People in prison need to be treated with dignity, made in the image and likeness of

God. No matter what someone has done, they need and deserve Christian love and charity as much as anyone else.

- See if your parish, or a nearby parish, has a prison ministry and if so, get involved.
- Volunteer to help out or donate to charities that support children whose parent(s) are in prison.
- Pray for prisoners.







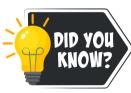




BURY THE DEAD

Reflects our call to care for people not only throughout their lives but also when they pass away. This act of mercy directs us to reverence and honour the memory of all those who have gone before us.

- Attend funerals and memorial services.
- Visit the graves of your deceased relatives and friends and pray for those you have lost.
- Express your sympathy and support to those who are mourning the loss of a loved one.
- Say a Rosary for someone who has passed away.
- Send a card (or make one) to someone who has recently lost a loved one.
- Visit the cemetery and pray for those you have lost.



On September 1, 2016, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, Pope Francis proposed expanding the usual list of the Corporal Works of Mercy to include "care for our common home"—that is, care for the Earth, for nature, and for all of creation.

This teaching demonstrates Pope Francis's deep concern for the environment. It also makes a great deal of sense when considered alongside the other works.



- What Corporal Works of Mercy are you already practicing in your family, school, and parish community?
- Look for opportunities around you (in your family, school, parish, wider community) to practice these Corporal Works of Mercy.
- Change begins with us in the ordinary actions of life. Is there something you could do during this Holy Year or during Lent to help the needy by practicing some of the Corporal Works of Mercy?

*Christ has no body on earth but ours, no hands, but ours, no feet, but ours. Ours are the eyes through which the compassion of Christ looks out upon the world. Ours are the feet with which He goes about doing good. Ours are the hands with which He blesses His people." St. Teresa of Avila











THE SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

The Spiritual Works of Mercy are kind acts by which we help our neighbours with their everyday spiritual and emotional needs. The Spiritual Works of Mercy may not be as well-known as the Corporal Works of Mercy, but they have long been a part of the Christian tradition. Jesus addressed the spiritual well-being of those he ministered to, and these Spiritual Works of Mercy guide us to help our neighbour in their spiritual needs. In adopting these works of mercy, we demonstrate in a visible way our love for God who commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves.

"Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love." — Mother Teresa

INSTRUCT THE IGNORANT

- Commit yourself to learning about the Catholic faith
- Share our faith and experiences with Christ with those around us.
- Share your insights, knowledge, and skills with others, especially friends, fellow students, coworkers.

COUNSEL THE DOUBTFUL

- Everyone has moments of doubt in their faith journey. Nevertheless, we should always remember that Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life and turn to him along our way.
- Offer guidance to those who are uncertain or struggling with decisions or doubts, helping them find clarity.
- Be courageous yet compassionate in calling people and institutions to be faithful to Gospel values.
- Put an end to gossip by walking away; set a good example for others.

COMFORT THE AFFLICTED

- Meet others in their time of emotional distress and anxiety.
- Be open to listening and comforting those who are dealing with grief. Even if we are not sure of the right words to say, our presence can make a big difference.
- Walk with others through their pain.
- Offer words of encouragement to those who seem discouraged.
- Offer positive words to fellow students or coworkers who are having a difficult time with their tasks.
- Be present to those who are struggling or in emotional pain or despair.



Love thy neighbour



"I am the WAY, the TRUTH, & the LIFE" John 14:6







BEAR WRONGS PATIENTLY

- Endure injustices or wrongs done to you without retaliation, showing patience and understanding. Place your hope in God so that you can endure the troubles of this world and face them with a compassionate spirit.
- Work at being less critical of others.
- Overlook minor flaws and mistakes.
- Give people the benefit of the doubt.
- Remember the ways Christ has forgiven us. Pray for those who have wronged you.

FORGIVE OFFENCES WILLINGLY

- Forgive others as Christ forgives us. Show his mercy and compassion to others.
- Pray for those who have wronged you and pray for the courage to forgive
- Ask forgiveness from others.
- Let go of grudges; go out of your way to be positive with someone you are having a difficult time with.
- Participate in the Sacrament of Penance.

ADMONISHING THE SINNERS

- Share and model your faith with others.
- Do not judge but be supportive in helping others find their way, guiding them toward repentance. Together we can learn to walk more closely with Christ.
- We have an opportunity to speak truth and kindness to that individual to help them back on the right path.

"Remove first the beam in your eye before removing the splinter in your neighbor's eye." (Matthew 7:5)

PRAY FOR THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

- Prayer is one of the most powerful ways we can support others.
- Joining together in prayer for the living and the dead entrusts us all into God's care.
- Intercede on behalf of others, praying for their well-being and salvation.
- Let those who are living know you are praying for them and do not be shy about asking them for prayers.

REFLECT



Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association During this season of Lent and throughout this Holy Year, how can we recommit ourselves to show God's love and mercy to our neighbours through the Spiritual Works of Mercy in our communities at school, home and parish?











CELEBRATING THE SEASON OF LENT AS PILGRIMS OF HOPE WHO SHOW MERCY

As we enter the season of Lent, we have an opportunity to reflect on our sinfulness, our need for conversion, and the generosity of God's grace and mercy. Lent is a 40-day period of prayer and penance in preparation for Easter (the greatest feast in the Christian calendar). Our acts of penance include fasting, prayer, and almsgiving in search of a change of heart, so that we may celebrate Easter with renewed energy and joy.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday (March 5), when we mark our foreheads with ashes as a symbol of our need to repent and turn back to God. Throughout history, ashes have been a powerful outward symbol of interior repentance and spiritual awareness. We all find ourselves needing to turn back to God many times a day, in ways small and large. It is not a matter of guilt, and it is not a shameful thing. It is simply that we are a better version of ourselves when we return to his side!



"Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths.
Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long." Psalm 25.4-5

Lent is also a time when we reflect on our Baptism. Preparation for baptism is the original purpose Lent even exists. When we, the already baptized, enter this season, we are joining and supporting those preparing for baptism at Easter by preparing to renew our own baptismal promises to turn away from sin and live for God at Easter.

During Lent we try to turn back to God, by detaching ourselves from those distractions and habits that have caused us to turn away from God. Lent is a time of conversion as we open our hearts to God by renewing our commitment to prayer and being living signs of hope and love for all.









Pope Francis, during his 2021 homily on Ash Wednesday stated that, "Lent is a journey that involves our whole life, our entire being. It is a time to reconsider the roads we are taking, to find the way back home, to rediscover the fundamental bond with God, on which everything depends."

As Pilgrims of Hope, we choose to journey together on the road of faith, hope and love. There is no doubt that during these 40 days of Lent we will experience moments of weakness and suffering, but we know that through these experiences, we will be renewed in our compassion for those who are hungry, suffering, or otherwise in need. Lent is a season of hope and Pope Francis continues to remind us that "hope does not disappoint"!

> "In our Lenten journey towards Easter, let us remember the One who "humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:8). During this season of conversion, let us renew our faith, draw from the "living water" of hope, and receive with open hearts the love of God, who makes us brothers and sisters in Christ." Pope Francis



God of goodness and mercy, Hear my prayer as I begin this Lenten journey with you as a pilgrim of hope. Let me be honest with myself as I look into my heart and soul, noticing the times I turn away from you. Guide me as I humbly seek to repent and return to your love. May love guide my efforts to practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Transform me this Lent, heavenly Father. Give me the strength to make myself 100% available to you every day as I prepare for Easter. Amen.









THE 3 PILLARS OF LENT: PRAYER, FASTING, ALMSGIVING

PRAYER

Prayer is a conversation with God, and it is one of the traditional pillars of Lent. Through the pillar of prayer, we seek to draw nearer to the Lord each day. Prayer is a beautiful way to reflect, repent, and renew one's faith during the season of Lent.

Praying for the living and the dead is one of the Spiritual Works of Mercy. We know that praying for others is one of the most powerful ways we can support those in need.

FASTING

Fasting, the second pillar of Lent, is a time for Christians to practice selfdiscipline, detaching from worldly pleasures, and focusing on spiritual growth. Fasting during Lent isn't just about giving up food, but also about redirecting our hearts to God, deepening our relationship with him, and developing a greater sense of gratitude and dependence on him.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops declare that the days of fast and abstinence in Canada are Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Fridays are days of abstinence (traditionally abstaining from meat but also, we can fast from social media, gossip, etc.), but Catholics may substitute special acts of charity or piety on this day.

Pope Francis stated during one of his Lenten reflections in 2017 that "fasting makes sense if it really chips away at our security and, as a consequence, benefits someone else, if it helps us cultivate the style of the Good Samaritan, who bent down to his brother in need and took care of him."

Here are four ways that we can practice the Spiritual Works of Mercy by fasting:

- When we fast from anger and be patient with others.
- When we fast from grudges we can forgive others.
- When we fast from being overly concerned with our own selfish needs, desires, and interests, we will be more open to comfort those who are suffering.
- We can fast from judgement and instead accompany others by being supportive and helping others find their way and give correction to those who need it.











ALMSGIVING

When we give alms (the final pillar of Lent), we reach out to those in need and help them without question as a way of sharing the experience of God's unconditional love. Giving to charity or the giving of alms is one way to share God's gifts—not only by donating money or goods, but by showing God's kindness and compassion to our neighbour through the sharing of our time and talents.

Almsgiving can involve practicing the Corporal Works of Mercy. During Lent we can share what we have with others by participating in our school's Lenten campaign.

- We can feed the hungry by donating to our local foodbank.
- We can clothe the naked by donating our used clothing to our parish's St. Vincent DePaul Society.
- We can give water to the thirsty by donating to Development and Peace.
- We can stand up to those who are marginalized and vulnerable.
- We can help prisoners or those who are confined due to fear, illness, or sadness.
- We can shelter the homeless by donating to a local shelter.
- We can love and respect those who have died.



"Let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action." 1 John 3:18

In adopting these works of mercy during Lent, in this Holy Year of Jubilee, we become signs of hope on the journey that hopefully brings us closer to Christ and leaves us changed by the encounter with him. We also demonstrate in a visible way our love for God who commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves. Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving lead us to the heart of what Lent is about - a deeper conversion.

REFLECT AND ACT



- How can prayer, fasting, and almsgiving during Lent bring you closer to loving like Christ by serving those in need through the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy?
- What can you do to make this Lent more meaningful through prayer, fasting and almsgiving?





March ~ Celebrating St. Joseph

March is significant as the month dedicated to St. Joseph, who is the patron saint of workers, fathers, families, homes and the universal Church.

Each time that an angel visited him, he readily responded to fulfill the requests made of him. When an angel visited Joseph in a dream and instructed him to take Mary, who would give birth to a son, as his wife, he did as the angel asked. When the angel returned to inform him that his family was in danger, he acted quickly and obediently to ensure the safety of his wife and the baby Jesus.

St. Joseph's unquestioning readiness to serve God and his family provide a model of care and steadfast love for God and family.

Feast Day ~ March 19

The celebration of St. Joseph's Feast Day is on March 19th. This date honours him as the earthly father of Jesus Christ and the husband of the Virgin Mary. St. Joseph is revered as a model of humility, obedience, and fatherly love. His quiet yet profound role in the Holy Family makes him an important figure in the Christian faith.



"Truly, I doubt not that the angels, wondering and adoring, came thronging in countless multitudes to that poor workshop to admire the humility of him who guarded that dear and divine child, and labored at his carpenter's trade to support the son and the mother who were committed to his care."

-St. Francis de sales



Patronage of Workers & Fathers

St. Joseph is known as the patron saint of workers, as he was a carpenter by trade. We are invited to reflect on our own work and its value. St. Joseph's dedication to his work and family, makes him a model for fathers and workers around the world. This makes March a month to reflect on the dignity of labor and fatherhood.

"Saint Joseph was a just man, a tireless worker, the upright guardian of those entrusted to his care. May he always guard, protect, and enlighten families." Pope John Paul II







DEVOTION TO ST. JOSEPH

In the Catholic Church, the month of March is a time for increased devotion to St. Joseph, encouraging prayers for his intercession in personal and community matters. Devotees may pray novenas or offer special masses during this month.

† PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

St. Joseph, we come to you today with great faith and devotion. We ask for your intercession, for you are a protector of families, workers, and all those in need.

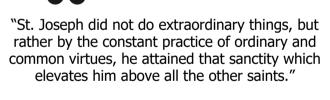
You, who provided for the Holy Family with love and care, guide us as we seek God's will for our lives.

Help us to grow in virtue, holiness, and trust in God's divine plan. Watch over our families, protect our homes, and lead us closer to Jesus and Mary.

St. Joseph, pray for us, that we may be strengthened in our faith and in our journey toward Heaven. Amen.







St. Joseph Marello



St. Joseph is seen as a model of humility, obedience, and faith. Reflect on these virtues. How can you apply them in your own life?





Jubilee Year 2025 Resources

GOODNEWSFORALL.CA RESOURCES:

Catholic Education Week Resource Kit - Elementary and Secondary



PILGRIM

CCCB Adult Faith Resources on the Jubilee Year 2025

CCCB Catechetical Activities for Children and Youth

Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy Resources

Archdiocese of Toronto - <u>Corporal</u> and <u>Spiritual Works of Mercy</u> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops - <u>Corporal</u> and <u>Spiritual Works of Mercy</u>

St. Joseph Resources

Redemptoris Custos (August 15, 1989) | John Paul II

On the Purpose and Mission of Saint Joseph

Apostolic Letter Patris Corde (With a Father's Heart) of the Holy Father Francis Patris Corde (With a Father's Heart) Video Reflections - CCCB

Our Catholic Identity Posters

These posters will be made available to Catholic school boards to celebrate Catholic Education Week.





Jubilee Year Calendar of Major Events



Interested in sharing what your school community is doing to promote the Jubilee Year ~ Pilgrims of Hope? Email: julie.webster@dpcdsb.org





Pilgrims of Hope and Our Catholic Identity: The Sacraments



Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association