The Pope’s Prayer Intentions for 2016
And Suggested Works of Mercy

Pope Francis has called on Catholics to “rediscover” the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy during this Year of Mercy so that we can enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel and live as true disciples of Jesus. This monthly list suggests some simple ways to live out each of these Works of Mercy in solidarity with the Holy Father’s prayer intentions for the month.

**Corporal Works of Mercy**
- Feed the Hungry
- Give Drink to the Thirsty
- Clothe the Naked
- Welcome the Stranger
- Heal the Sick
- Visit the Imprisoned
- Bury the Dead

**Spiritual Works of Mercy**
- Counsel the Doubtful
- Instruct the Ignorant
- Admonish Sinners
- Comfort the Afflicted
- Forgive Offences
- Bear Patiently Those Who Do Us Ill
- Pray for the Living and the Dead
JANUARY

**Universal Intention: Interreligious Dialogue**
That sincere dialogue among men and women of different faiths may produce the fruits of peace and justice

**Instruct the Ignorant** (Spiritual Work of Mercy)
- Review the Apostles Creed and prepare a brief description of what it means to be a Catholic that you can share with others.
- Speak with a friend of another religious faith and learn about his/her beliefs.

**Evangelization Intention: Christian Unity**
That by means of dialogue and fraternal charity and with the grace of the Holy Spirit, Christians may overcome divisions.

**Welcome the Stranger** (Corporal Work of Mercy)
- Invite a neighbor or colleague of another faith to your home for dinner and conversation.
- Attend an interreligious program in your community.

FEBRUARY

**Universal Intention: Care for Creation**
That we may take good care of creation — a gift freely given—cultivating and protecting it for future generations.

**Heal the Sick** (Corporal Work of Mercy)
- Take an otherwise homebound neighbor or relative for a drive where they can see the beauty of nature and God's creation.
- Financially support the efforts of Catholic Relief Services to provide safe drinking water to those in impoverished areas.

**Evangelization Intention: Asia**
That opportunities may increase for dialogue and encounter between the Christian faith and the peoples of Asia.

**Instruct the Ignorant** (Spiritual Work of Mercy)
- Use time you would ordinarily spend in front of a computer or television to expand your understanding of an Asian culture and its connections to Christianity.
- Invite a representative from a missionary order that works in Asia to speak at your parish.
MARCH

Universal Intention: Families in Difficulty
That families in need may receive the necessary support and that children may grow up in healthy and peaceful environments.

Visit the Imprisoned (Corporal Work of Mercy)
• Volunteer at a youth center or an after-school program that serves children in need.
• Cook a meal or provide respite care for a family with a sick child.

Evangelization Intention: Persecuted Christians
That those Christians who, on account of their faith, are discriminated against or are being persecuted, may remain strong and faithful to the Gospel, thanks to the incessant prayer of the Church.

Comfort the Afflicted (Spiritual Work of Mercy)
• Learn more about the plight of Christians in the Holy Land and inform others about what is happening to them.
• Offer a daily prayer for all persecuted Christians.

APRIL

Universal Intention: Small Farmers
That small farmers may receive a just reward for their precious labor.

Feed the Hungry/Give Drink to the Thirsty (Corporal Work of Mercy)
• Buy products from a local farmers to support their income.
• Sponsor projects of organizations that provide seed or animals to families in poor nations struggling to survive.

Evangelization Intention: African Churches
That Christians in Africa may give witness to love and faith in Jesus Christ amid political-religious conflicts.

Pray for the Living and the Dead (Spiritual Work of Mercy)
• Spend an hour in Eucharistic Adoration for the specific intention of Christians in Africa.
• Learn about the witness of the Ugandan Martyrs in defense of the sanctity of Christian marriage and tell their story to other Christians.
MAY

Universal Intention: Respect for Women
That in every country of the world, women may be honored and respected and that their essential contribution to society may be highly esteemed.

Comfort the Afflicted (Spiritual Work of Mercy)
- Provide comfort and assistance to suffering women through the support of a local crisis pregnancy center, women’s shelter, domestic abuse program, bereavement ministry or support group for families with relatives in prison.
- Pray for all women who have lost a child to gun violence or drug overdose.

Evangelization Intention: Holy Rosary
That families, communities, and groups may pray the Rosary for evangelization and peace.

Visit the Sick (Corporal Work of Mercy)
- Pray the Rosary with a sick or infirmed family member at home or in a nursing home.
- Invite homebound parishioners to join a parish-wide effort to pray the rosary daily for the intentions of evangelization and peace.

JUNE

Universal Intention: Human Solidarity
That the aged, marginalized, and those who have no one may find — even within the huge cities of the world — opportunities for encounter and solidarity.

Bury the Dead (Corporal Work of Mercy)
- Attend a wake or funeral in your parish for someone who otherwise would have no one present.
- Make time near anniversaries and holidays to bring an elderly relative to visit the grave of a loved one.

Evangelization Intention: Seminarians in Novices
That seminarians and men and women entering religious life may have mentors who live the joy of the Gospel and prepare them wisely for their mission.

Counsel the Doubtful (Spiritual Work of Mercy)
- Provide an example in your family that encourages religious vocations to the priesthood and religious life.
- Contact a local religious community or diocesan vocations office and ask how you can support seminarians and novices.
JULY

Universal Intention: *Indigenous People*
That indigenous peoples, whose identity and very existence are threatened, will be shown due respect.

**Admonish Sinners** (Spiritual Work of Mercy)
- Speak out when someone uses disparaging language or racial epithets.
- Thoughtfully consider and take restorative action if you as a consumer are purchasing items that exploit the environment or are produced by those in third world nations who are not fairly compensated for their work.

**Evangelization Intention: Latin America and the Caribbean**
That the Church in Latin America and the Caribbean, by means of her mission to the continent, may announce the Gospel with renewed vigor and enthusiasm.

**Clothe the Naked** (Corporal Work of Mercy)
- Organize a clothing drive to support victims of poverty and natural disasters.
- Brainstorm creative ways that the material resources in your home and community could be shared with those in need.

AUGUST

Universal Intention: *Sports*
That sports may be an opportunity for friendly encounters between peoples and may contribute to peace in the world.

**Welcome a Stranger** (Corporal Work of Mercy)
- Buy some tickets to an international sporting event and donate them to a youth group.
- Volunteer as a sports coach for a league that serves children of different economic and ethnic backgrounds.

**Evangelization Intention: Living the Gospel**
That Christians may live the Gospel, giving witness to faith, honesty, and love of neighbor.

**Bear Patiently Those Who Do Us Ill** (Spiritual Work of Mercy)
- Pray for patience and understanding before responding to a perceived hurt or insult.
- Learn to “let go” of minor flaws you see in others. Examine your own behavior toward others and ask for forgiveness for any time you have hurt others by your words, actions, or demeanor.
SEPTEMBER

Universal Intention: Centrality of the Human Person
That each may contribute to the common good and to the building of a society that places the human person at the center.

Visit the Imprisoned (Corporal Work of Mercy)
- Learn about and support ministries and programs for those who are incarcerated and their families.
- Send a card with a handwritten note to someone who is in a nursing home or long term care facility. If you don’t know anyone, contact a local facility and offer to help in some way.

Evangelization Intention: Mission to Evangelize
That by participating in the Sacraments and meditating on Scripture, Christians may become more aware of their mission to evangelize.

Instruct the Ignorant (Spiritual Work of Mercy)
- Meditate prayerfully on the Sunday readings and share your prayer experience with at least one other person.
- Invite a friend or family member who is a “lapsed Catholic” to attend a Mass or faith-sharing event with you.

OCTOBER

Universal Intention: Journalists
That journalists, in carrying out their work, may always be motivated by respect for truth and a strong sense of ethics.

Council the Doubtful (Spiritual Work of Mercy)
- Write a letter-to-the-editor praising a story that upholds a strong ethical stance on a public policy issue.
- Avoid negative comments on internet postings; use technology to evangelize in a positive and uplifting way.

Evangelization Intention: World Mission Day
That World Mission Day may renew within all Christian Communities the joy of the Gospel and the responsibility to announce it.

During this “Respect Life Month,” try to incorporate each of the Corporal Works of Mercy as a sign of solidarity with the dignity of the human person.

Feed the Hungry
- Donate to a local food bank or St. Vincent de Paul Society

Give Drink to the Thirsty
- Distribute water bottles to the homeless and poor.

Clothe the Naked
- Organize a “baby shower” for a needy mother

Welcome the Stranger
- Serve as a greeter at your parish to welcome newcomers.

Heal the Sick
- Volunteer to drive people to medical appointments

Visit the Imprisoned
- Get involved with ministries dedicated to helping prisoners and their families.

Bury the Dead
- Learn about palliative care services in your community and volunteer to support patients and their families during and after the dying process.
NOVEMBER

Universal Intention: **Countries Receiving Refugees**
That the countries which take in a great number of displaced persons and refugees may find support for their effort which show solidarity.

**Welcome the Stranger** (Corporal Work of Mercy)
- Keep a spare change jar in your home and donate what you collect each month to Catholic Relief Services or another organization supporting refugees.
- Take the time to become informed of public policy issues related to immigration and refugees and then contact elected officials in support of policies helping to show solidarity with families displaced by war, famine, and natural disasters.

**Evangelization Intention: Collaboration of Priests and Laity**
That within parishes, priests and lay people may collaborate in service to the community without giving in to the temptation of discouragement.

**Forgive Offences** (Spiritual Work of Mercy)
- Ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten your mind of the burdens of the past that need healing and forgiveness.
- Do a good deed for someone who has hurt you.
- Pray for the strength and wisdom to let go of the burden of past offences and hand them to God.

The Year of Mercy ends on November 20, 2016 but your continued application of the Works of Mercy will hopefully continue to be a conscious and ongoing part of your life as a disciple of Christ.