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Daily Reflections

Journeying through Lent



Center for Spiritual Development

BEING WITH INTENTION

By Julie Mussché

From the Gospel of Matthew

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

MATTHEW 25:34-36

Reflection

We are moving through the heart of Lent and this passage captures a key pillar of the season, almsgiving. Almsgiving has a broad definition and application. Some may call it charity or an act of justice, as in Tzedakah, dāna, or sadaqah. A significant and persistent spiritual practice, particularly during high holiday

seasons, it is where the rubber hits the road in translating dogma into action.

Traditionally, almsgiving entails giving food, water, shelter or money to those who are lacking life's necessities. Recognizing that we each can give as we are able and it is the intention and relative sacrifice that affords the measure, the Works of Mercy open up the possibilities of living out our covenantal commitment and obligation, in ways that appreciate our means and abilities. As such, **here they are:**

Corporal Works of Mercy

The corporal works of mercy are kind acts by which we help our neighbors with their material and physical needs.

feed the hungry
give drink to the thirsty
clothe the naked
shelter the homeless
visit the sick
visit the imprisoned
bury the dead

Spiritual Works of Mercy

The spiritual works of mercy are acts of compassion by which we help our neighbors with their emotional and spiritual needs.

counsel the doubtful
instruct the ignorant
admonish sinners
comfort the afflicted
forgive offenses
bear wrongs patiently
pray for the living and the dead

Yes, you are correct, every Lent I am excited to share the Works of Mercy. There are many expressions of each of the Works of Mercy and is it no wonder why they feature so prominently during Lent.



Giving Counsel
Photo by SHVETS Production

For Pondering

- Reflecting on the idea and intent of almsgiving, what comes to heart and mind?
 - Over the journey of your lifetime, when and how have you received Works of Mercy?
 - What are the graces of giving or receiving acts of mercy?
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For Prayer

*O Merciful One
You desire mercy,
not sacrifice;
knowledge of You
rather than burnt offerings;
conciliation, not judgment
of others;
forgiveness, not punishment,
love, not hate.*

*Help me to follow
the footsteps of Jesus
and to be an expression of
Your limitless love.
Amen.*

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