



JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY

December 8, 2015 - November 20, 2016



First Sunday in Lent — February 14, 2016

Pope Francis' first monthly work of mercy

The Pope of the surprise papal visit dropped in to two different nursing homes in Rome unannounced on Friday [January 15]. The visits kicked off the Pope's monthly works of mercy, which he plans to do on Fridays during the Jubilee Year of Mercy.

The Pope's first visit on Friday was to the Bruno Buozzi Retirement Home on Via di Torre Spaccata, on the outskirts of Rome, which houses 33 elderly people.

Pope Francis was able to speak briefly with each person during his visit. He was accompanied by Archbishop Rino Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization.

Before returning to the Vatican, the pope made a second surprise stop at the 'Casa Irde,' a home where six persons in a vegetative state live with their families and are provided assistance.

According to a Vatican statement, with these visits, Pope Francis wanted to emphasize the great importance of elderly persons, of grandparents, and the value and dignity of life in every situation.

In December, Pope Francis said in an interview with the official website for the Jubilee of Mercy that he would be making 'different gestures' of mercy once a month on Fridays during the Holy Year.

'The revolution of tenderness is that which, today, we must

cultivate as a fruit of this year of mercy: the tenderness of God toward each one of us,' the Pope told the official Jubilee publication 'Credere'.

That the first of his Friday visits were a surprise should not be, well, surprising, to anyone who's been following Francis' pontificate.

From early on in his pontificate, Francis has been surprising the people of Rome by showing up in unexpected places – to pay his hotel bill, to get some new glasses – to the delight of many.

In July 2014, the Pope showed up unannounced at a Vatican cafeteria to lunch with some blue-collar employees of the Holy See.

In February of last year, Francis surprised residents of the Arcobaleno shantytown with a visit before making his way to say Mass at the Roman Parish of San Michele Arcangelo.

In Oct. 2015, Pope Francis paid an inaugural – and, yes, surprise – visit to the 'Gift of Mercy' house, a newly built Vatican shelter for homeless men.

© Catholic News Agency. Photo © L'Osservatore Romano.



What works of mercy have you committed to this year?

Saints Cyril and Methodius

Cyril and Methodius were brothers born in Thessalonica, in present Greek Macedonia, in the first part of the ninth century. Their father was a military officer stationed there and as a result they learnt the local Slavic dialect. Their father died when Cyril, the younger brother, was only fourteen. They were then placed under the protection of one of the chief ministers of the Empire, a man who was ardently committed to education. Cyril thrived and went on to become a university lecturer and was ordained a priest. Methodius served as a deacon until about 868.

Cyril's genius, and mastery of Arabic and Hebrew, saw him commissioned to undertake a number of missionary expeditions on behalf of the Empire. Finally, in 862, Prince Ratislav of Great

Saints of Mercy

Moravia, in central Europe, petitioned the Emperor and the Patriarch to send missionaries to convert his Slavic subjects. Among their achievements in this mission were: the invention of an alphabet, now called Cyrillic, so that they could produce texts in the native tongue; The translation of the Bible into the language of the people; the development of a specifically Slavic liturgy. The last met with considerable resistance from German church officials. During the five years of their mission, a great number of people were converted to Christianity.

In 867, they were summoned by the

Pope to Rome. They were warmly received and the liturgy that they had devised was formally authorised. Pope Adrian II eventually ordained Methodius to the priesthood. Cyril, whose health was ailing, entered a monastery where he died in 869. Methodius continued the mission to the Slavs and was eventually appointed Bishop of Sirmium with authority over the Slavic church. Disputes with the Germans over his authority led to him being deposed and imprisoned in Germany for two and a half years. Finally, the Pope secured his release and Methodius returned to his ministry which he exercised, though not without conflict and opposition, until his death in about 885.

Their feast day is February 14.

Works of mercy: to instruct the ignorant

GIVE DRINK TO THE Thirsty

In his great mercy, Jesus said, *“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink.”* (John 7:37–38) We are sustained by the drink, material and spiritual, that he gives us. We share with others. *“And whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”* (Matthew 10:42)

The ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO in partnership with LOYOLA PRESS.

More on Pope Francis's vision at: www.loyolapress.com/popefrancis

WWW.ARCHCHICAGO.ORG

© 2015 Archdiocese of Chicago, Fr. Louis J. Cameli

Bury the Dead

Burying the dead is the only one of the Corporal Works of mercy not named in the parable of the sheep and the goats – “When I was hungry you gave me food. . . .” It comes from the book of Tobit: “If I saw any of my nation dead, or cast around the walls of Nineveh, I buried him” (Tobit 1:17). “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” (1 Cor 15:36–55).

The Corporal Work of Mercy, Bury the Dead, calls us to treat the dead “with respect and charity, in faith and hope of the Resurrection” (Catechism of the Catholic Church). We are called to mourn and pray for the dead, to entrust them to God and to comfort their loved ones.

How do we live this corporal work of mercy today?

- ✂ As a family, research where your deceased family members are buried and take a family trip to visit their gravesites and pray for them.
- ✂ Be faithful about attending wakes / visitations and funerals of family and friends.
- ✂ Form or join a bereavement committee at your parish.
- ✂ Supply a dish for a funeral luncheon.
- ✂ Examine your life to see what old grudges or injuries you have refused to relinquish and choose to “bury” them by setting them aside and reconciling with others.

This corporal work of mercy is directly related to the spiritual work of mercy – to pray for the living and the dead.

Source: Archdiocese of Milwaukee. archmil.org.



The Cross of Christ invites us also to allow ourselves to be smitten by his love, teaching us always to look upon others with mercy and tenderness, especially those who suffer, who are in need of help, who need a word or a concrete action which requires us to step outside ourselves to meet them and to extend a hand to them.

How many times have we seen them in the Way of the Cross, how many times have they accompanied Jesus on the way to Calvary: Pilate, Simon of Cyrene, Mary, the women....

Pope Francis on Mercy

Confession heals, confession justifies, confession grants pardon of sin. All hope consists in confession. In confession there is a chance for mercy. Believe it firmly. Do not doubt, do not hesitate, never despair of the mercy of God. Hope and have confidence in confession.

Saint Isidore of Seville

