



CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY WEEK #4: Clothe the Naked

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings: Dt 30: 10-14 • Ps 69 • Col 1: 15-20
Lk 10: 25-37

I. Reflect:

During the week of July 10-17, Archdiocesan parishes will be working on Clothing the Naked. The imperative to clothe the naked is spoken of in both the Old and New Testament. The prophet Isaiah exhorts us: “When you

see the naked, clothe them” (Is 58:7). In the Letter of St. James we read: “What good is it if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,” but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (James 2:14-16).

One of the saints most emblematic of Christian charity is St. Martin of Tours, the Roman soldier who saw a poor man shivering in the cold and cut his cloak in two to share it with the beggar. Clothing provides for two basic human needs: protection and dignity. We probably do not see people very often who are literally shivering in the cold, but many poor and homeless people rely on charitable organizations for their clothing. One very direct way to carry out this work of mercy is to go through our own closets a couple of times a year and donate some of the clothing crammed into our closets. Better yet, perhaps we could develop the habit when shopping to buy some new clothing to give away – if you were in the position of someone who had to go to a thrift shop, wouldn’t it be a treat to find something new there?

There is a social dimension to this work, too: often our “bargains” are paid for by the sweat of people laboring in inhuman conditions here and abroad. We have a moral responsibility to take a peek behind the stylish logo of popular clothing and shoes and if we find that the item has been produced at the cost of the human dignity of those who made it, we should boycott that product and let the manufacturer know why.

Clothing is not only necessary for protection; we need it to maintain our human dignity. Contrast two scenes in the Gospel: when the prodigal son returns home, the father gives him his best robe, shoes on his feet, and a ring. These items symbolize the young man’s dignity ▼

2. Act:

As part of the Year of Mercy, Corporal Works of Mercy project weeks, **the Cathedral of St. Raphael and St. Patrick Church Social Justice Committee is organizing an underwear, socks and undershirts clothing drive from July 10-22, 2016.** You can drop off NEW, in the original packaging, Men’s and Women’s socks, underwear, and undershirts to the Cathedral of St. Raphael & St. Patrick Church. There will also be a box for monetary donations.

Items will be donated to local shelters in Dubuque. Undergarments are always in short supply for those living in shelters and those who are homeless. Undergarments are rarely donated but are essential to comfort, self-confidence and dignity of all. Help bring some dignity and comfort to those in our community by chipping in and donating new items!

as the father's son, and show that his position has been restored to him. By contrast, in the Stations of the Cross we meditate on the stripping of Jesus; this act of humiliation was inflicted on him several times during his Passion. To take away his clothing was to steal from him any standing in the human community, and to humiliate him profoundly.

This work of mercy also challenges to confront the crime of sexual exploitation in our society, and in particular the plague of pornography. This multi-billion dollar industry is founded on the heinous act of stripping men, women, and even children of their basic human dignity. If it is a virtue to clothe the naked, it is a sin to strip the clothed.

In the first book of the Bible, God made garments to clothe Adam and Eve (Gen 3:21). In the last book of the Bible we are given a vision of the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband (cf. Rev 21:2). When the moment of glory comes, may we be among those who saw the Lord in our sisters and brothers, and clothed him (cf. Matt 25:38).
(Diocese of Oakland)

3. Learn More:

Year of Mercy Website

The Year of Mercy is now in full swing, offering us many opportunities to receive and share God's mercy. Parishes in the Archdiocese of Dubuque are coming up with wonderful ways to practice the corporal works of mercy. Watch for stories about parish projects for the Year of Mercy in The Witness: <https://www.dbqarch.org/offices/witness/local-news/> and on the Archdiocese website: <https://www.dbqarch.org/yearofmercy/service-project/>

Clothing Donation Sites in the Dubuque Area

Many in our Dubuque community rely on social services for clothing. Our homeless shelters are full and turning away many guests; this population is sometimes called "ghost people" because they often reside in places we may not frequent and can easily be missed if one is not looking for them.

You can help by making contributions throughout the year to locations listed below. As a family, you might consider setting a time or two during the year when all clean drawers and closets to make a family contribution.

Goodwill

2121 Holliday Drive | 563-557-3158

St. Vincent de Paul Society

1351 Iowa Street | 563-584-2225
4990 Radford Ct. | 563-584-2226

Dubuque Rescue Mission Thrift Store

398 Main Street | 563-583-3443
998 Central Avenue | 563-583-3443

Birthright

221 West 9th Street | 563-556-1991
Accepts maternity, baby clothes & diapers.

Mary's Inn Maternity Home

PO Box 3338 | 563-552-6288
Accepting maternity & baby clothes and
diapers.

Open Closet at St. John's Lutheran Church

1276 White Street | 563-583-65720
Please call ahead.

United Way of Dubuque

Area Tri-States Community Clothes Closet
215 W. 6th Street | 563-588-1415
Accepting men's and women's professional
attire and shoes.