

Bulletin Shorts for Year A – 2017

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The Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy was a year of grace. It afforded us a lens with which to read the Gospel of Luke and all of the Scripture assigned to Lectionary Year C. Pope Francis encourages us to continue our merciful ways and merciful words into this next year.

The image of Christ seated on his throne surrounded by both doers and non-doers (sheep and goats) of mercy works is from the Gospel we hear at the end of this year on the Solemnity of Christ the King. Let the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy guide us there Sunday by Sunday.

Use these bulletin shorts in ways that are helpful. They are a gift.

Link:

Bulletin Shorts for Advent in Year A – page 1 of 2

First Sunday of Advent – 27 November 2016

Beginning where we left off. Each year, the new season of Advent begins where we left the old liturgical year. We ponder the coming (*parousia*) of Jesus Christ the Second Time. We do this in prayer, in action, in anticipation. We wait for this unknown time, but not in fear. So, how do we stay ready? By **not** doing the bad things listed in the Second Reading (Romans 13:11-14). By doing the list of merciful things we practiced all last year. The Jubilee Year of Mercy is not a “one and done” year. It was rehearsal for this new year of grace.

- Let us resolve to hear the Gospel of Matthew attending to compassion, justice, and mercy.
- Let us keep before us the works of mercy.
- Let us “put on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The Works of Mercy

Corporal Works of Mercy

These are charitable actions by which we help our neighbors in their bodily needs. The corporal (bodily) works of mercy are:

- Feed the hungry
- Give drink to the thirsty
- Shelter the homeless
- Clothe the naked
- Visit the sick
- Visit the prisoners
- Bury the dead
- Give alms to the poor

Pope Francis adds:

- Care of our Common Home

Spiritual Works of Mercy

These are actions that help our neighbor in their spiritual needs. They include:

- Counseling the doubtful
- Instructing the ignorant
- Admonishing the sinner
- Comforting the sorrowful
- Forgiving injuries
- Bearing wrongs patiently
- Praying for the living and the dead

Pope Francis adds:

- Caring for our Common Home

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, pages 508 and 529

Download the prayer card with the image of Christ the King on the throne, the Gospel of the great divide of sheep and goats, and the list of the Works of Mercy at http://www.dio.org/uploads/files/Worship/Mercy_Jubilee/Prayer_Cards/PrayerCard--WorksOfMercy.pdf

Second Sunday of Advent – 04 December 2016

Images show us the way. Isaiah's image – new sprout from an old stump. From Jesse's stump (the father of King David) comes Jesse's flower (Jesus the Christ). Matthew's image – it hints at new people from baptismal waters. From the font comes new Christians bathed in Christ, clothed in Christ, and illumined by Christ. Like Christ and claimed by him. On this Second Sunday of Advent – as we wait for Christ to come again – John the Baptizer does not mince words. Behavior is far more important than pedigree, than lineage, than ancestors. We are called to live in faithful harmony, to be the brood of the baptized.

- How will I “be justice” this week, giving to others what they are due?
- How will I be faithful?
- How will I do what is right?

Third Sunday of Advent – 11 December 2016

Come to save us. That is our prayer. It is God's promise. How do we know? Our own eyes will show us. Our own ears will tell us. The feeble are made strong. The frightened do not fear. The blind see. The sick are healed. The poor are cared for. Jesus' ministry of healing and mercy is evident everywhere. At this mid-point of Advent, this time of waiting for the Second Coming of Christ is not a passive waiting in easy chairs. It is active. It is robust. It is filled with behavior as if Jesus is right here, right now. Because he is! In what ways can his ministry of healing and mercy be my own?

- Who needs a ride to doctor or grocery?
- Who needs a visit to ease loneliness or fear?
- And let me recite Psalm 146:6-10 all week – it sings of mercy works.

Fourth Sunday of Advent – 18 December 2016

Paying attention to dreams. When we get to be of a certain age, we do not always sleep through the night. We are awakened by dreams, by concerns not yet resolved, by other needs. (I am less peeved by this now. I want to be like Joseph in today's story of the pending birth of Jesus.) Joseph has a problem. He wants to be righteous. He does not want to shame another. He sleeps on it. He dreams. And God speaks.

- What might God be telling me in the quiet of the night?
- How will my prayer, my concern be answered?
- What will I choose to do?