

"Everything a baptized person does every day should be directly or indirectly related to the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy."

- Dorothy Day

Prayer: The Call to Mercy, the Model of Dorothy Day

Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker movement, declared the "Catholic Workers' rule is the Works of Mercy." A convert who had a turbulent young adulthood, Dorothy had made negative choices in her youth. She later declared that she had been shown great forgiveness and mercy by God, and she felt compelled to offer mercy to others. The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy became the context of her ministry to the homeless and her ongoing work to transform systems and structures so justice and peace could flourish and mercy could be shown to all members of the human family.

In this Year of Mercy we are entering,
We ask to be inspired by your servant, Dorothy Day,
Who was called to the practice of mercy,
A gift of God she knew well in her own life,
And a gift she passed on to the poor and suffering
Whom she recognized as God's children,
Especially the hungry, the broken, the lost.

May we too practice the Works of Mercy,
Recognizing how mercy has been rained upon us
By our loving God, and recognizing the need for this gift
Among those still hungry, thirsty, sick, imprisoned, and lost.
May we follow the example of Dorothy Day,
Who turned away no one, whose open hands
Were merciful and healing to all she embraced.

May we remember the call to mercy is a call
To justice and peace, as Dorothy knew so well,
As she called for mercy and justice for the homeless,
For farmworkers, for refugees and immigrants,
For all who wished to live without war and violence.

Mercy streamed down upon Dorothy Day and transformed her.
May we know such mercy
And respond to her challenge
To choose mercy towards others,
Especially each day of this holy year.

- Jane Deren, Ph.D.

