

Day 172 – Tuesday, September 8

The works of mercy are broken up into two categories: the corporal works of mercy and the spiritual works of mercy. Sacred Scripture defines seven corporal works of mercy (Matt 25:31-46): Feed the hungry, Give drink to the thirsty, Clothe the naked, Shelter the homeless, Visit the sick, Visit the imprisoned, Bury the dead. The corporal works of mercy are concerned primarily with meeting the physical needs of others.

Give Drink To The Thirsty

For many of us, feeling parched doesn't last very long — there is almost always bottled water, a drinking fountain, or a water cooler nearby. But sadly, there is an overwhelming amount of people on the planet who still don't have access to clean drinking water. They spend their entire existence thirsting physically for life-sustaining H₂O. We are all thirsting for something. Oftentimes it's something that not even water can quench. We are thirsting emotionally: for good marriages, the love of a parent, attention, an honest friend, validation, and happiness. We are thirsting intellectually: for knowledge, continuous learning, meaningful work, and thought-provoking conversations. We are thirsting spiritually: for wisdom, purpose, and a deeply personal relationship with Jesus. We live in a world full of people who are thirsty, waiting for — wanting, needing — someone to satisfy their thirst. You and I are called to give drink to the thirsty, whether those people are living in developing countries or in our own homes.

GIVE DRINK TO THE THIRSTY

In a literal sense, we can donate money to organizations that are committed to bringing clean and safe water to people in countries like Haiti, Ethiopia, and India. Some of us may even be compelled to go on a mission trip. Figuratively, we can say “I love you” more often. We can listen attentively, remember people's names, and look people in the eye during conversations. We can ask people how they are doing and wait for their reply. We can smile at everyone we pass on the street, and offer compliments when compliments are due. We can impart knowledge, pray for others, and share how God has done and is doing amazing things in our lives. What are you thirsting for? Chances are, someone in your life is thirsting for that exact same thing. By understanding our own thirst, we are able to quench the thirst of others. The works of mercy challenge us to step outside of our comfort zones, and to put the needs of others before our own needs — and wants. The works of mercy challenge us to “not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love” (Prayer of Saint Francis). The works of mercy challenge us to see Jesus in every single person. If [today](#) you saw Jesus thirsting— physically, emotionally, intellectually, or spiritually — wouldn't you do everything in your ability to satisfy his thirst?

In the light of eternity, we're here for a very short time, really. We're here for one thing, ultimately: to learn how to love, because God is love. - James Finley

Sincerely,
Fr. Jim Kaptein