

Audio of Prelate: Praying for the Living and the Dead

Final podcast on the works of mercy. “The need to support one another with our prayer,” says the Prelate of Opus Dei, “has the savor of the early Church.”

11/08/2016

Previous podcasts in the series:

1. Prelate Speaks about the Works of Mercy (Introduction)

2. Visiting and Caring for the Sick

3. Feeding the Hungry and Giving Drink to the Thirsty

4. Clothing the Naked and Visiting the Imprisoned

5. Sheltering the Homeless

6. Burying the Dead

7. “Instructing the ignorant” and “offering good advice”

8. Correcting those who err

9. Forgiving offenses

10. Comforting the Sorrowful

11. Bearing Others' Defects Patiently

Translation of the Prelate's audio recording is found below.

To listen to the 10-minute audio in Spanish click [here](#).

“Without me you can do nothing.”

These words of Jesus to his disciples – and to you and to me – make clear that without our Father God, without his help, our efforts to be merciful would be in vain. But Jesus also assures us that his concern for all men and women leads Him to want to accompany us always, if we act uprightly. So as we approach the end of this Jubilee Year, we put ourselves once again in his hands and entrust to Him the resolutions that will make our ordinary life a “time of mercy.”

The last work of mercy for us to consider is that of *praying for the living and the dead*. By our prayer for our neighbor, in first place we humbly acknowledge that all good comes from God alone, and so we turn to Him; also we gain divine protection for souls; and finally we

reinforce the supernatural ties that unite us to others, including those who already enjoy God's presence.

The need to support one another with our prayer – both for the living and for those who have already left this world, but who continue being part of the Christian family – has the savor of the early Church. “Pray for one another, that you may be healed. The fervent prayer of a righteous person is very powerful.” says the Apostle James. “We give thanks to God always for all of you, remembering you in our prayers, unceasingly,” Paul writes to the Thessalonians. “If anyone sees his brother sinning, if the sin is not deadly, he should pray to God and He will give him life,” says Saint John. After hearing these words, we can ask ourselves, dear friends, if we are supporting with our prayer our colleagues at work, our family, our neighbors, the people in our parish....

If someone is having a hard time, do we help that person with our prayers, even though he or she may never come to know about it?

Helping one another through prayer is a work of mercy that God has wanted to be abundantly present in the history of the Church, from its origins right up to today. Recently the Pope is asking us to pray intensely for persecuted Christians, brothers and sisters of ours willing to give up everything to preserve the faith. Similarly, he has invited us to pray for immigrants who risk their lives seeking a future in other countries, for those who are unemployed, for the elderly living alone, and also for many others in need of the warmth of the Communion of Saints.

Praying for others will help us escape from the selfish individualism that leads so many people to withdraw into a comfortable and apparently

secure life, attentive only to personal needs, but insensitive to the suffering of others. As Saint Josemaría said: “We must learn to recognize Christ when he comes out to meet us in our brothers and sisters, the people around us. No human life is ever isolated. It is bound up with other lives. No man or woman is a single verse; we all make up one divine poem.” Therefore, in a society that seems to be gradually ridding itself of the ties that bind it together (this isn’t meant to be pessimism), daily prayer will be a powerful source of unity and strength.

Besides the great human problems I mentioned above, there are also the difficulties and opportunities each one confronts in their personal or family life. That’s why it is so in accord with the Gospel to bear generously in our soul the joys and sorrows of others! And since we Christians want to live in solidarity

with those around us, let us be convinced that when one of the baptized prays, he or she is already doing so. When we seek God's intercession, He hears us and intervenes. He does not remain indifferent. Let us firmly believe that we can change the history of our neighbor, or of a family or a community, by the strength of our own prayer. Sometimes we may not see results, or things may not turn out the way we had imagined, since we are well aware that God has his own ways, ever merciful, and ever surprising. But let us dream! Let us pray for those who do not seem to offer any hope; let us ask for what is beyond our own possibilities; and let us never put a limit on God's mercy.

In an earlier reflection on another work of mercy, *Burying the dead*, we considered with confidence how mercy can cross the barrier of death, and benefit even those who await

their eternal reward. Praying for the dead enables our love to reach those who have rendered their souls to God. Saint Josemaría stressed how moved Jesus was by the death of the son of the widow at Nain, and how he reacted by bringing him back to life. As Saint Josemaría wrote: “Saint Luke says, *misericórdia motus super eam*, [Jesus] was moved by compassion, by mercy for that woman.” Let us learn from that scene: can’t our prayer also move our Lord anew so that, out of his mercy, He grants true Life to those who have gone before us?

The Jubilee Year that is coming to a close should not be just one more event on the calendar, but rather should spur us forward and renew our firm desire for holiness. I ask myself and I ask you, with trust and as a friend: has this time of the Holy

Year left its mark on your soul? Have you discovered God as a merciful Father? Have you come to know our Lord's merciful heart more deeply, his interest for each and every one of us?

Let us recall that, as the Holy Father said, “it is not enough to experience God’s mercy in one’s life; whoever receives it must also become a sign and instrument for others, through small, specific gestures.” Therefore, the fourteen works on which we have meditated together during these months invite us to constantly plant the seed of the “first evangelization” in so many hearts that still do not know Christ or that have fallen away from Him. With the warmth of our affection and with the help of grace, many souls perhaps hardened by indifference will open again to God’s love, and there will awaken in them the hunger to know

the good Father who awaits their return.

We place our resolutions and intentions in our Lady's hands, and pray: *Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope ... turn thine eyes of mercy towards us; and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!*

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