

What's Your "Mercy Quotient"?

This inventory is based on suggestions made by Joe Paprocki. Use it to determine your individual or family's "mercy quotient." In the column at right, rate each of the suggestions according to how frequently you or your family perform these acts of corporal and spiritual mercy. Use these numerical values:

0 = Never 1 = Rarely 2 = Occasionally 3 = Often 4 = Regularly

The Corporal Works of Mercy

Feed the Hungry

- provide proper nutrition for your family and your loved ones _____
- support and volunteer for food pantries, soup kitchens, free community meals and agencies that feed the hungry..... _____
- make a few sandwiches to hand out as you walk through areas where you might see people in need..... _____
- educate yourself about world hunger and support organizations working to end world hunger..... _____
- avoid wasting food..... _____
- share meals and extra food with others, especially those in need..... _____
- other (add something you do which is not on this list)..... _____

Shelter the Homeless

- help neighbors care for their homes and do repairs..... _____
- support and/or volunteer at a homeless shelter..... _____
- support and/or volunteer for charitable agencies who care for the homeless and build homes for the poor..... _____
- advocate for public policies and legislation that provide housing for low-income people..... _____
- consider becoming a foster parent..... _____
- other (add something you do which is not on this list)..... _____

Clothe the Naked

- donate good condition clothes and shoes to agencies that provide assistance for those in need..... _____
- participate in programs that provide towels and linens for hospitals in distressed areas..... _____
- volunteer to work at a clothing drive or at a shelter where clothing is distributed to those in need..... _____
- support the work of the St. Vincent de Paul Society..... _____
- offer to mend or launder clothes for those who do not have the means to do that on their own..... _____
- other (add something you do which is not on this list)..... _____

Visit the Sick

- spend quality time with those who are sick or homebound..... _____
- take the time to call, send a card or an email to someone who is sick..... _____
- volunteer to drive patients to medical appointments and treatment facilities..... _____
- volunteer at a hospital, nursing home or care facility..... _____
- assist those who are full-time caregivers for family members..... _____
- cook and/or deliver meals to the sick and homebound..... _____
- other (add something you do which is not on this list)..... _____

Visit the Imprisoned

- support and/or participate in ministries to those who are incarcerated..... _____
- support program and agencies that advocate on behalf of those who are unjustly imprisoned..... _____
- support job-training and educational programs designed to rehabilitate prisoners..... _____
- pray for and support the families of inmates..... _____
- support programs that provide holiday gifts for prisoners and their families..... _____
- support efforts that seek prison reform the abolition of the death penalty..... _____
- other (add something you do which is not on this list)..... _____

Give to the Poor

- take some small bills, loose change or coupon books to hand out to people you encounter in need.....
- throw your coin change into a jar and periodically donate it to a charity.....
- make a regular monetary donation to a charity that tends to the needs of the poor.....
- support program and agencies that advocate on behalf of the poor.....
- support national, state or local efforts that seek to provide a living wage.....
- other (add something you do which is not on this list).....

Bury the Dead

- attend wakes and funeral Masses for family, friends, neighbors and parish members.....
- send Mass cards to families of those who have died.....
- support or volunteer at a hospice or participate in a bereavement ministry.....
- volunteer for your parish's funeral choir or funeral dinner committee.....
- spend time with widows and widowers.....
- take family, friends and relatives to visit the cemetery.....
- support ministries that offer free Christian burials to those unable to afford one.....
- other (add something you do which is not on this list).....

Spiritual Works of Mercy

Instruct the Ignorant

- commit yourself to learning about the Catholic faith.....
- share your insights, knowledge, and skills with others, especially friends, fellow students, coworkers.....
- invite non-Catholics to enroll in RCIA; serve as a sponsor or team member for RCIA in your parish.....
- take time to "tutor" those who are just beginning tasks.....
- read good literature and encourage others to do the same.....
- volunteer as a mentor in a local school or a catechist in your parish religious education program.....
- other (add something you do which is not on this list).....

Admonish the Sinner

- be courageous but compassionate in calling people and institutions to be faithful to Gospel values.....
- intervene in situations in which people are clearly doing harm to themselves or others.....
- make an effort to talk calmly and openly with people whose lifestyle seems destructive or immoral.....
- respond to negative and prejudicial comments with positive statements.....
- put an end to gossip by walking away; set a good example for others.....
- other (add something you do which is not on this list).....

Advise the Doubtful

- work at being optimistic and avoiding cynicism.....
- respond to cynicism, skepticism, and doubt with hope.....
- disavow political discussions which are cynical and negative.....
- avoid broadcast, online and social media which are unfair and negative.....
- ask people about their hopes and assist them in making concrete plans to attain them.....

Comfort the Afflicted

- be present and walk with those who are struggling or in emotional pain and despair.....
- offer words of empathy and encouragement to those who are discouraged.....
- offer assistance and encourage to fellow students or co workers who are having a difficult time with their tasks.....
- offer sympathy to those who are grieving.....
- help those in pain to appreciate prayers of lamentation.....
- other (add something you do which is not on this list).....

Forgiving Offenses Willingly

- pray for those who have wronged you and for the courage to forgive.....
- ask forgiveness from others and be aware of those who have forgiven you.....

- let go of grudges..... _____
- go out of your way to be positive with someone you are having a difficult time with..... _____
- pray to appreciate the priority of mercy over justice..... _____
- other (add something you do which is not on this list)..... _____

Bear Wrongs Patiently

- work at being less critical of others..... _____
- overlook minor flaws and mistakes..... _____
- give people the benefit of the doubt..... _____
- assume that people who may have hurt you did so because they are enduring pain of their own..... _____
- pray for those who have wronged you..... _____
- other (add something you do which is not on this list)..... _____

Pray for the Living and the Dead

- make morning and evening prayer a regular part of your daily routine..... _____
- attend Mass regularly..... _____
- pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the rosary or other devotions on a regular basis..... _____
- learn new forms of prayer, like centering prayer, lectio divina, or the daily examen..... _____
- keep a list of persons you want to remember in prayer each day—include those no one else may pray for..... _____
- integrate an “attitude of gratitude” into your daily prayer and give thanks for all God’s blessings..... _____
- other (add something you do which is not on this list)..... _____

Determine Your “Mercy Quotient”

Add all of the numbers in the right hand column..... _____

Use this scale to determine how you’re doing:

- 0-75 = you’re just getting started; choose a few more things that you can begin to do or do more often.
- 76-150 = you’ve made a good start, but you can probably do more; do the things you’re doing more often or look for some new practices you could do without too much extra effort.
- 151-225 = you’re doing well; look back to where you marked “0” and “1” to see where you can improve by doing some things more regularly or incorporating new practices into your effort.
- 226-300 = you’re doing very well; there’s always room for improvement, but you should feel good about your effort.
- over 300 = you’re doing exceptionally well; don’t get discouraged if you can’t maintain this level of excellence all the time.

This inventory is based on suggestions originally made by Joe Paprocki and published online by Loyola Press.