Communicating God's love (and mercy) with ministry at home

We've been hearing from a lot of parents who are frustrated that the pandemic is stopping them from being involved in the ministries they are involved in at their parishes or in their communities. It's good to want to make a difference, but many of us are missing out on a tremendously important ministry opportunity. Our homes! Did you know that, as far as the Church is concerned, parenting is a ministry. Although we tend to think of "ministry" as " the churchy stuff we do at church—or to serve others." Ministry is really any activity that enables us to communicate God's love to another person. If that isn't parenting, I don't know what is. Here are some ways you can practice the Corporal Works of Mommy (and Daddy Too) to experience and encourage a more meaningful spirit of service in the home.

Feed the Hungry

Family members truly bless one another when they create a nurturing place around the dinner table for communion and conversation to occur and when they take time to plan nourishing, heartwarming meals. Considerable research reveals the benefits of families sitting down to meals together, including everything from better physical and mental health outcomes to higher academic achievement and greater life and relationship satisfaction. Add "growing in holiness" to the list!

Give Drink to the Thirsty

What parent hasn't been asked to get a thirsty child a drink in the middle of the night? Getting up and serving that child cheerfully with compassion is a work of mercy that reminds the

child that his or her needs are important and that he or she will be heard and loved even when it is inconvenient for us to do so.

Clothe the Naked

Finding the grace to be patient while dealing with a toddler who only wants to wear the blue shirt or helping a teen dress attractively yet modestly isn’t just an exercise in patience; it’s an opportunity to help your children remember their worth in God’s eyes!

Shelter the homeless

Putting in the thought, time, and effort it takes to make your house a welcoming home by working to make it a beautiful and orderly, yet comfortable and hospitable, place is a great way to remind yourself and your family of your dignity as children of God. And teaching your family to be good stewards of what you have been given is an important lesson in godly gratitude.

Visit the Sick

When you respond lovingly to a sick child, refusing to treat him or her as a burden or an inconvenience even though the illness has thrown your schedule into chaos, you are practicing mercy, growing in personal holiness, and showing your child his or her worth in God’s eyes and yours.

Visit the imprisoned

It is one thing to banish our children to their rooms or to a timeout when they have committed some offense, but when we visit them a few minutes later, talk them through their error, teach them what to do instead, and work to heal their hurts and rebuild our relationship, we are practicing true mercy and showing our children they still have worth in God’s eyes and

our eyes, even when they mess up.

Bury the dead

Helping a child deal with sad transitions in life, whether due to the loss of a pet or favorite relative or other events that can turn family life upside down, requires incredible compassion and sensitivity, especially when we are dealing with our own grief. Doing this well enables our children to connect with God's loving presence even in times of sadness.

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As we shelter in place, families are experiencing a great deal of stress and frustration. This is a time where need to look for more ways to take care of each other and draw more meaning from the service we practice at home. Let's use this time to practice the ministry of family life and celebrate the blessings of our domestic church.

For more, check out The Corporal Works of Mommy (and Daddy Too).