



THE ARCHDIOCESE OF GALVESTON-HOUSTON



WHILE AT HOME



FAMILY LIFE MINISTRY

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Walking through the transition together

AN INVITATION FOR THE ROAD

It looks like we will be back on the road soon, and this represents a whole new set of challenges for our families.

We all want to “return to normal,” but it will not be the “normal” that it was before this pandemic. We will advance, we will begin to travel a new path, but we also want to know how to improve, not only in the routine aspects of our life but also in what relates to our inner being, our spiritual life.

The question must be, will we return to the normality we knew? Well, the answer is probably no, because our lives have undergone a conversion in many ways, but primarily because our risen Lord renewed us!

Last Sunday, we heard in the Gospel the Road to Emmaus, how Jesus patiently walked together with two disciples, “from affliction to celebration.” Jesus healed their faith in crisis and invited them to become beacons of their small community, their domestic Church. This invitation is the same as we have today.

FOUR KEY ELEMENTS



Jesus showed us an incredible cycle with four components, four elements in sequence: **Service, Word, Worship** and **Community** (cf. Lk 24 and Jn 20, 14-18). Perhaps the cycle will not be visible for you initially. But it makes a lot of sense when we walk together as a couple or as a family and certainly help us to stay strong and united with Him during this new walk.

Here some practical points that will help us to be living churches:

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THE SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY.

There is no coincidence that the first act of risen Jesus is a spiritual work of mercy.

John and Luke show our Lord comforting Mary Magdalene next to his empty grave (cf. Jn 20:14), and exhorting two of his little sheep on the road to Emmaus (Cf. Lk 24: 17).

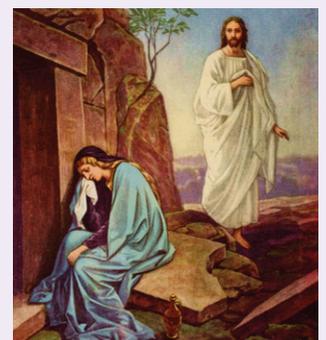
Christ literally walked the talk of Mercy as the top priority after shocking events, so it's a good idea to make it ours too. Here is the list spiritual of works of mercy for you to remember.

- Comfort the afflicted
- Exhort those who are mistaken
- Teach those who don't know
- Counsel the doubtful
- Bear our wrongs patiently
- Forgive our offenses willingly
- Pray for the living and the dead

Two important notes:

1. Practice them as a form of love and service to others, nothing more.
2. Don't expect to be recognized, nor brag about it.

Remember, we all seek to imitate Christ. Just be an instrument of His love, and you will receive more than you give.



1. Walking together the road of works of mercy. As parents or spouses, we have had many occasions when we need to put everything else aside and walk with someone to recognize, process, and relieve their doubts, anxieties, or fears, helping them to recover their calm.

Maybe some of us have required and experienced assistance from others, too; even if we shared or we have received acts of compassionate love, we all recognize the great feeling of reward that we received after such actions. Some of us even realized this is the power of the Divine Mercy poured onto us.

Now, for the coming times, it will be helpful to question ourselves on how we will serve those afflicted, laying in a ditch, on the roads, of our daily lives.

2. Walking together to new paths of discovery. We can discover that texts in the Scripture are not merely recollections of historical events, but also ongoing vibrant realities.

Many of us feel personally involved in the stories, and maybe our hearts are set on fire. We recognize that somehow Jesus found the way to encountering us through his Word.

Now, the question is: Are we willing to take the next step, and remain attentive to deeper realities of this unyielding love? Or will we fall back into daily "routines" and distractions?

3. Walking together the journey of deeper worship.

All those that decide with conviction to enter into a spiritual journey recognize it can become static and "the same thing" that is dangerous in itself.

We may need to make an extra effort to nourish our prayer life by giving meaning to our vocal prayers, from asking to offering; from fear into awe, from narrative discourse into silence; and back. Sometimes routines get in the way, and we need to remember to give thanks to Our Father, to break bread with Christ, and to invite the Holy Spirit to dwell among us.

The questions to facilitate this process in your family could be: What do your children, spouse, parents, and you, need now? How flexible have you become for encountering Jesus in different ways?

4. Walking together back to the communities we love and belong.

Honestly speaking, most of us are eager to run again into our groups of friends and gatherings. As we do so, we can smoothly "go back to normal," or be intentional bearers of peace, joy, and service for others. How can we display in different ways our appreciation, respect, admiration, and love to others even now that we have to keep the physical distance? And once the physical distance is over, will our next handshake be a deliberate sign of peace? Will our greetings remained purposely filled with joy?

OPENING THE ECONOMY WITH SAFETY.

In recent days, we all hear encouraging news related to reopening retail stores, movie theaters, and other establishments. While doing so, prudence and consideration to others will be great allies.

While we go back to the streets, we need to keep in mind protecting our vulnerable populations and avoid any unnecessary risks for them. Also, considering others maintaining physical distancing, washing our hands often, and wearing masks will help us to prevent an upturn in contagion.

The more we remain prudent and consider others on the streets and shops, the more likely we will keep the virus contained and go back to normal gradually. Learn more about the guidelines provided by our civilian authorities at gov.texas.gov/opentexas

As we transition back to the road, we can inspire and lead our families through the narrow gate of Service, Word, Worship, and Community with a deeper understanding of His love in a more in-depth and constant dialogue with Him. That might be our call as parents and family leaders, to continue walking the path with abundant life in His Name.

