**Service**  L. Riedl January 2024

Is your council wondering about how we are doing regarding service projects? What should we be doing? The Gospel of Matthew says:

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’ And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’” MT 25:31-46

The Corporal Works of Mercy give us a model for how we should treat all others, as if they were Christ in disguise. They are charitable actions responding to the basic needs of humanity, and are a good measure of your service commission. They are: **to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to give shelter to travelers, to visit the sick, to visit the imprisoned, and to bury the dead**.

Another resource to find ideas is the Diocese of La Crosse [Directory of Parish Social Ministry Initiatives](https://diolc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/PSM-Directory-061621.pdf) found at <https://diolc.org/social-concerns/parish-social-ministry/social-initiatives/> The purpose of the directory is to share our initiatives and ideas with each other.

Here are a few ideas I have found:

* Prison Ministry (write letters)
* Hospital visits
* Visit with those who are grieving
* Handyman projects for elderly
* Accompany new people at Mass
* Drive people to Mass or appointments
* Light house cleaning for elderly
* Visit the sick in their homes
* Host a baby shower
* Bring someone progressive flower bouquet (every visitor brings one flower!)
* Bring dinners to families in crisis such as hospitalizations
* Do activities at a local Assisted Living Care Center
* Pick up groceries for homebound
* Fill a freezer with meals for a new mom
* Purchase coloring books and crayons and leave them in hospital waiting rooms/urgent care
* Write down someone’s life story for their children and grandchildren
* Listen and pray.

There are a lot of ideas out there. Be creative! The main point is to respond with Gospel values to the basic needs of humanity as we journey together through this life.