



VISIONS

Lord, When Did I See You?

Young people across the country live the Works of Mercy

by Elaine Ingalls

Feed the hungry

When Alec Johnson was 12 years old, his Christmas list included a cell phone and a pricey laptop. His parents Michael and Mehrnaz Johnson wanted him to realize how much he already had. So they brought him and his friend Luke Trolinger to serve breakfast burritos to homeless people on the streets of San Diego County.

That experience inspired them to start BurritoBoyz. Since November 2010, the group's volunteers

haven't missed a single Sunday. As of this summer, they have shared more than 165,000 hot meals for more than 350

consecutive Sundays. Each week, about 20 adults and 20 youth volunteer to help. Michael Johnson says, "Our goal is to treat the homeless, individually, with respect and love." For more information, visit burritoboyz.org.



Bury the dead

When Katie Prior was nine years old, she started learning to play the trumpet. Her great-grandfather was a WWII Army veteran and was nearing the end of his life. Katie wanted to play Taps at his funeral, but could not learn the notes before he passed away. Katie continued to play, and learned that many veterans have a recording of Taps played at their funeral, not a live performance.

Out of respect for their service to their country, Katie thought that veterans deserved to have a live musician present at their final honors to play the National Song of Remembrance. And so, at 13 years old, she was inspired to start the Youth Trumpet and Taps Corps (YTTC).

Katie received the Girl Scout Gold Award for founding the YTTC, which has since spread to 30 states. Volunteers are high school trumpet players.



Katie met Arizona Senator John McCain while visiting Washington D.C., two years ago. She was invited to the White House and given the Champion of Change Award for "Young Women Empowering Their Communities."

They must know how to play the trumpet, cornet, bugle, or flugelhorn.

Playing Taps at military funerals is the organization's main mission; however, volunteers also perform Taps and Echo Taps at wreath layings, perform Branch of Service songs at Hospice Recognition Ceremonies, and perform patriotic music at Veterans Day and Memorial Day ceremonies. Visit YTTC at trumpetandtaps.org.

Bury the dead

Some people have no family or friends to attend their funeral when they die.

Students at Saint Xavier High School in Louisville, Kentucky, attend funerals for people who are poor and forgotten, including those who are homeless, murder victims, and people who have died of drug overdoses. Members of the school's Saint Joseph of

Arimathea Society are excused from class to attend funerals at the Meadowview Cemetery in Louisville. They lead the prayer service and bear the casket to the prayer pavilion and the burial site.



One of the roles the students have is helping to carry the casket from the hearse to the prayer pavilion, and then from the pavilion to the burial site.

Saint Xavier students lead the prayer service at a funeral. Students gather to honor the people who have died. At more than half of the burials, there is no family present.

Visit the sick

Harry and Heath Bennett have a friend named Timmy who was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma last year. The brothers created a lip balm for Timmy to use during his chemo treatments. "We wanted to create a product that would help him," says Harry. "Cancer patients get dry, chapped lips and skin. The scents we chose were Timmy's favorites. And I love lip balm." This was the start of their foundation, Bennett Brothers Balm.

The Bennett brothers are 8 and 12 years old. They both attend the Saint Joseph School in Medford, Massachusetts.

Over the past year, Bennett Brothers Balm has expanded and developed new products, including new lip balm flavors and a body balm. All of their products are made from organic and vegan ingredients, and can be used on pets to treat dry skin and cracked paws. The



boys have created a balm for "Tummy Troubles" to soothe upset stomachs too. Their newest product is Bette's Blissful Eye Balm, which moisturizes skin and softens wrinkles. The brothers create new products based on people's needs.

The brothers fundraise at 5K races and charity fundraisers in Medford and nearby towns. All of the profits go to the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. The

Harry and Heath Bennett go to the Saint Joseph School in Medford, Massachusetts. They started their foundation because they wanted to help cancer patients, especially their friend, Timmy.

money is put into a fund for Timmy's doctor, Dr. Amy Billett, to help pay for her research in Hodgkin's Lymphoma. In just a year, Harry and Heath have raised almost \$3,000. Their friend Timmy is now in remission, and they will continue to help people just like him. They hope to eventually raise \$1 million.

For more information about their work to support cancer research, visit their website at bennettbrothersbalm.virb.com.



The Bennetts attend local fundraisers and charity events to sell their products. They have raised almost \$3,000 for the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

Visit the sick

After serving at an assisted living community, Anika Kumar saw how isolated and lonely older adults could become. At 14, Anika started Forget Me Not—a calling program between high school volunteers and older adults from all over California.

The seven regular student callers in the program meet at Anika's school—Notre Dame High School in San Jose—once a week during the school year. Each volunteer is assigned three people to call, and each conversation lasts about 20 to 30 minutes. The same volunteer and senior citizen talk each week.



Anika Kumar founded Forget Me Not calling charity when she was 14.

They talk about hobbies and TV shows, but also more in-depth things, like family, political beliefs, and the students' futures. "In society today, there is a lot of inadvertent ageism, and programs like mine try to address these issues by making sure older adults' voices are heard," says Anika.

Visit forgetmenotservices.org to learn more about this "friendly" calling program.



Students from Notre Dame High School in San Jose meet once a week during the school year to call older adults from all over California.

Shelter the homeless

Everyone is involved in the Homeless Project at Saint Ambrose School in Brunswick, Ohio. Students in kindergarten through eighth grade created life blankets and an app that helps manage resources for people who are homeless in the area.

To create the Homeless Mission Operators App, students researched shelters, food banks, and the places where people who are homeless may find shelter—for example, under bridges. The students took the data and created layers of geographical points.

Mission operators from Labre Homeless Mission will use the app to pinpoint where services and homeless members of the community are located. Then they will bring resources to those people at a marked location. The first version of the app has been launched. The school hopes to



Students worked together to build models for sleeping gear, clothing, and portable housing.

launch a second version later this year and expand the app nationwide.

Students also brainstormed about 90 different products for portable housing, food storage, clothing, and sleeping gear. After narrowing their ideas to sleeping gear, they created pillows and blankets. They then tested these blankets in 30-degree weather to see if they would keep people warm in the winter. The students created 18 "life blankets" that maintained temperatures of 60 to 70 degrees. To learn more, search "The Homeless Project" on the school's website, saintambroseschool.us.

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Students went outside during the winter to see if the blankets they made could hold heat. They maintained a temperature of 60 to 70 degrees.

TALK

- 1 Which of the Works of Mercy describes an action you have done?
- 2 Which of the Works of Mercy is an action you have done with your family or friends? Describe what you did.
- 3 How willing are you to be judged on how you treat the least among us?



SUNDAY GOSPEL

Feast of Christ the King

Matthew 25:31–46

Jesus Teaches the Works of Mercy

Leader: Jesus, Ruler of the Universe, you call us into your community of peace and love. Open our hearts to listen as you tell us about your community.

All: Amen.

Narrator: When Jesus comes to rule at the end of time, he will sit on his throne and gather the people of all nations before him. He will divide them into two groups like a shepherd dividing sheep from goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. To the people on his left Jesus will say:

Jesus: You have seen me many times before, but you refused to help me. I was hungry, but you didn't feed me.

All: Lord, when was that?

Jesus: I was thirsty, but you didn't give me a drop to drink.

All: Lord, when was that?

Jesus: I was homeless, but you didn't want to get involved.

All: Lord, when was that?

Jesus: I didn't have enough to wear, and you bought more clothes for yourself.

All: Lord, when was that?

Jesus: I was sick, but you were too busy to help me.

All: Lord, when was that?

Jesus: I was in prison, and you didn't even write.

All: Lord, when was that? When did all this happen?

Jesus: When you refused to help the least of my brothers and sisters, you refused to help me. Go! Get out of my sight!

All: We have chosen for ourselves. We may not enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Narrator: Then Jesus will turn to the people on his right and say:

Jesus: You have my Father's blessing. The kingdom prepared from the beginning of the world belongs to you. You have seen me many times before, and you have helped me. You saw I was hungry and gave me food.

All: Lord, when was that?

Jesus: You saw I was thirsty and gave me something to drink.

All: Lord, when was that?

Jesus: You saw I was homeless, and you found me a place to live.

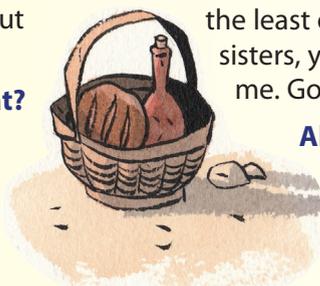
All: Lord, when was that?

Jesus: You saw I didn't have enough to wear and gave me some of your clothes.

All: Lord, when was that?

Jesus: You saw I was sick, and you took care of me.

All: Lord, when was that?



and DOCTRINE

Connecting GOSPEL

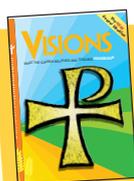
Jesus Values Service to Others

At the Second Vatican Council, the bishops of the world called the Works of **Mercy** the most striking way we can show we are Catholics. They are actions every Catholics can do. We can feed, give drink, clothe, welcome, visit, and care for one another. We can put ourselves in the place of others. We know how we feel

when we are hungry, thirsty, alone, sick, or in trouble.

Jesus values every human person. Jesus became one of us to show us the great value now and forever of loving one another. When we help the least among us, we help Jesus himself.

- 1 Why do you think Pope Francis recently said that caring for creation is a Work of Mercy?
- 2 What do you enjoy most about helping others?



Turn to page 51 in *What the Church Believes and Teaches* to learn the Spiritual Works of Mercy and to review the Corporal Works of Mercy you just learned in the Sunday Gospel. The word *corporal* means of the *human body*.

➤ For **free** at-home activities, visit [@](http://gospelweeklies.com/seasonal)

People Are People, Not Things



Jesus: You heard I was in trouble and stood by me.

All: Lord, when was that? When did we do all this for you?

Jesus: When you did these things for the least of my brothers and sisters, you did them for me. Come! You have my Father's blessing. Welcome to my kingdom!

TALK

- 1 What are the Works of Mercy?
- 2 Why don't people recognize they have helped Jesus?
- 3 Why does Jesus identify with the least?
- 4 Whom do you know that does any of the Works of Mercy in your neighborhood and parish?
- 5 What is a Work of Mercy you can do?

Fifty years ago, the bishops of the Second Vatican Council published a pastoral constitution called *Gaudium et Spes* in Latin, the *Church in the Modern World* in English. It called Catholics to care for people who are poor and in any way afflicted as if they were our brothers and sisters. We are to make their joys and sorrows, anguish and anxieties our own.

The document summarizes Catholic social teaching, which Pope Leo XIII began to write about in the late 1800s. Factory managers then were treating workers as if they were commodities, like the steel, rubber, and wood it took to make carriages. Pope Leo said that such treatment was wrong.

The Pope insisted that the human person is not a commodity, something to be used and used up. The human person is sacred: "It is shameful and inhuman to use human beings as things for gain and to put no more value on them than what they are worth in muscle and energy" (*Rerum Novarum* #31). This teaching on behalf of the dignity and sacredness of human beings is the first principle of Catholic social teaching.

Catholic FAITH WORD +

MERCY Compassionate love that is faithful, active, and concerned for the good of others.

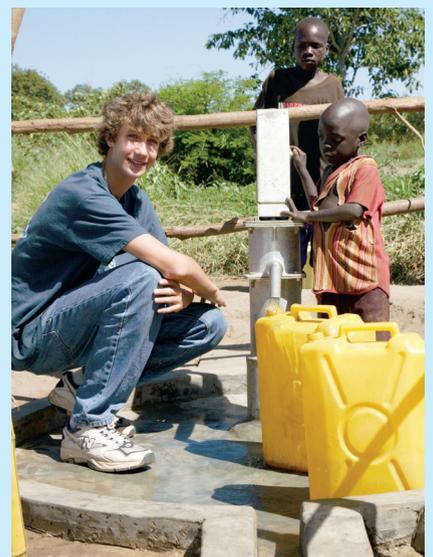
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Give drink to the thirsty

Ryan Hreljac started fundraising to build his first well nearly 20 years ago. The mission of Ryan's Well Foundation is to provide clean water for people in remote areas across the world. The organization also educates local communities about hygiene and improving sanitary conditions.

Ryan's Well also works to maintain existing wells and other water systems. In Amansie, Ghana, Ryan's Well has partnered with Dawn of the New Age (DONA). This project includes the drilling of seven wells in six villages and one at a health-maternity clinic. It will affect about 4,500 people who will now have access

to potable (drinkable) water. Visit ryanswell.ca/about-ryanswell/our-impact/ to learn how many lives are saved with each project.



Catholic Social Teaching Helps Us Live the Works of Mercy

The Works of Mercy make our vocation as Catholics clear. They challenge us to provide the basics people need to live—food, water, shelter, clothes. They challenge us to keep people part of the community when they are sick or in prison. How do we live the Works of Mercy today? Catholic social teaching can help us.

Read the principles of Catholic social teaching. Identify which principles help us live which Works of Mercy.

The Human Person Is

Sacred All people are sacred, made in the image and likeness of God. The right to life is basic.

- **Make a commitment to treat others in your family or class as sacred—no gossiping, lying, or put-downs.**

The Human Person Is

Social We grow through others' care and friendships.

Human beings form families, communities, societies.

- **Plan a shared activity—a "social" with the residents of a local nursing home or day care program.**



Rights and Responsibilities

People have a fundamental right to life, food, shelter, health care, education, and employment, and to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

- **Create a display that shows how doing Works of Mercy fits with others' rights and our responsibilities. Add stories to illustrate from the news.**

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

We measure public policy decisions by how they will affect the poorest and most vulnerable people among us.

- **Volunteer as a family or class to help serve a meal at a local homeless shelter or organize a clothing drive for a shelter.**



The Dignity of Work and Worker Rights

Work is more than a job. It is participating in God's creative action. People have a right to decent, productive work and fair wages. The economy exists to serve people, not the other way around.

- **Set up a Task Sheet for your class. Everyone can share jobs that need doing.**



Solidarity We are one human family. Our responsibilities to each other cross all differences. We are all responsible for everybody.

- **Invite classmates from different cultures or ethnic groups to share examples of their traditions or customs—for example, foods, clothes, language.**

Care for God's Creation

We live interdependently in one web of life with all that God has made. We care for creation.

- **Help your school, parish, or home go green by recycling, saving water, walking or biking, and planting trees.**



With My Family and Friends



Pray

Jesus, help us to notice when someone is poor, sick, lonely, hungry, or in need in any way.



Think

How can you recognize the needs of others and help fill those needs?



Act

Go through closets and pantries in your home. Find things you can donate to a food shelf or thrift store.

You Can Make the Difference

Before you start:

1 Form groups of four. Cut the Situation and Solution cards from two copies of your *Visions* lesson and shuffle them together.

2 Cut out one Jesus Card and one Wild Card from one group member's lesson. Shuffle them into the deck.

3 The card dealer gives an equal number of cards to each group member until all cards are distributed. The card dealer also acts as score keeper.

4 Players keep their cards secret.

5 Look for matching Situation and Solution cards, but do not lay any matches down yet!

<p>Situation</p> <p>Jackie is a new girl and acts as if she is better than everyone else. She starts to get on everyone's nerves.</p> <p>1</p>	<p>Solution</p> <p>You invite Monique to sit with you and your new friends at lunch.</p> <p>8</p>	<p>Situation</p> <p>Every time the teacher leaves the room, Tommy throws stuff at other kids. You think it is funny and laugh, but you can tell some of the other kids feel bad.</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Solution</p> <p>Invite her to sleep over at your house and invite one of your better friends, too.</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Situation</p> <p>Isabel doesn't bring a lunch to school anymore. She says she's not hungry. You begin to worry about her health.</p> <p>7</p>	<p>Solution</p> <p>Stop laughing at Tommy and maybe he'll stop.</p> <p>4</p>
<p>Situation</p> <p>Kara wears clothes that some kids think are ugly. The other kids in your class make comments about her outfits behind her back.</p> <p>2</p>	<p>Solution</p> <p>You invite Jackie over to your house to find out whether she is really stuck up or just nervous about being the new girl.</p> <p>1</p>	<p>Situation</p> <p>Jaime has been out of school for a week. Nobody seems to know why. He is not your friend, but he doesn't have any other friends either.</p> <p>5</p>	<p>Solution</p> <p>If Conner is going to get placed in a group anyway, why not invite him into your group once in a while?</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Situation</p> <p>You used to be friends with Monique, but now you have new friends that you like better. She doesn't really have any friends now.</p> <p>8</p>	<p>Solution</p> <p>Isabel might have an eating disorder or might not have enough food at home. Telling a teacher is a good idea either way.</p> <p>7</p>
<p>Situation</p> <p>Whenever you have to get into groups, Conner is left alone. The teacher has to place him in a group.</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Solution</p> <p>Call Jaime and ask him why he has been gone. Offer to bring him his homework.</p> <p>5</p>	<p>Situation</p> <p>You don't know her very well, but Lana invites you to sleep over at her house. You don't really want to go.</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Solution</p> <p>You realize that Kara might not have money for cool clothes or she may just have different taste in clothes. You decide not to talk about Kara behind her back.</p> <p>2</p>	<p>JESUS</p> <p>WILD</p>	

To play:

6 Take turns, drawing one card from the person on your left. (In the style of Go Fish.)

7 After you draw a new card, you may lay down one match if you have one. If you are the first person to get that match, read the two cards aloud to receive two points for that match. If you are not the first person to get the match, you receive one point for it.

8 Continue playing until all matches are made.

9 Whoever is left with the Wild Card loses two points.

10 Whoever has the most points at the end of the game—wins.

Jesus Card You may use the Jesus Card as a free Solution Card at any point in the game, but when you make the match, you must read the Situation Card aloud, make up a good solution to the problem, and share it aloud. This match will count as two points.

