

BRINGING HOME THE GOSPEL

November 26, 2023 • Our Lord Jesus Christ the King • Matthew 25:31–46

Celebrate the Family

Throughout the Gospels we hear about what Jesus does to bring about the kingdom. In this parable, we hear what we need to do to be a part of the kingdom. In this story of Christ's kingship, we hear about the corporal works of mercy—feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, and so on.

Isn't it good to know that by providing for our children's physical, emotional, and spiritual welfare we find ourselves blessed by Jesus, seated on the right side of God?

Parents are no strangers to the corporal works of mercy. Every day we feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty (think of all those school lunches packed!) We clothe the naked (or at least pay for the clothes of those born naked). We take care of the sick and visit the imprisoned. (Think about the bars on a crib or a heartbroken teen self-imprisoned in her room.)

If we consider the spiritual works of mercy—instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, admonish sinners, forgive offenses, bear wrongs patiently, comfort the afflicted and pray for the living and the dead—we will discover seven more everyday opportunities for parents to be blessed.

We listen patiently to a little one as she sounds out the words in her primer. With every first-day-of-school pep talk we counsel the doubtful. We admonish the sinner when we provide Christian commentary during almost any sitcom or news report. It's a spiritual work of mercy when we let a penitent teenager off lightly for mouthing off. And it's an opportunity to bear wrongs patiently when an "I'm

sorry" from the offender isn't forthcoming. Parents comfort babies suffering from colic and adolescents afflicted with acne.

Sometimes we think in order to be a saint we have to have visions or die as a missionary. But if we listen to this Gospel reading, it is fairly clear that the path to heaven runs right through our kitchen and family room.

FAMILY RESPONSE

Plan a special meal for no particular reason except to celebrate being a family. Let everyone have a part in the preparations, decorations, and clean-up.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

List all the good things in your life. List all the good things about yourself. Ponder your goodness and blessings. What do you want to remember from last week? What are you looking forward to next week? What are your concerns?