

# THE REEVOLUTION OF THE WORKS OF MERCY

CANTIERE  CULTURALE

*Preface by*

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***Any practical action is inadequate if it does not include love for man, a sort of love that is nourished in the encounter with Christ. So, the intimate personal participation in the needs and sufferings of the other becomes a giving of myself: and because the gift does not humiliate the other, I must not only give him something of mine, but also of myself; I must be part of the gift as a person.***

Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter Deus Caritas Est, 34

# INDEX

Preface ( <i>His Excellency the Most Reverend Mons. Fortunatus Nwachukwu</i> )	5
Introduction ( <i>Luigi Spadoni</i> ) .....	7
The re <b>E</b> volution of the Works of Mercy .....	9
Opera <b>M</b> 's Guide .....	11
The Imprints of Opera <b>M</b> .....	23
Timeline of the Works of Mercy .....	27
Works of Mercy ( <i>Carlo Miglietta</i> ) .....	31
Cerimony of the Delivery of the Foulard .....	33
Saint Joseph .....	35
The Forums of spazio + spadoni .....	37
The Mercy of God is at Work... Always! .....	39
Notes .....	41



# PREFACE

During the audience granted to the participants of the plenary session of the Dicastery for Evangelization, Fundamental Questions Section, in the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican in March 2024, Pope Francis stated that 'God's mercy never fails, and we are called to bear witness to it and to make it, so to speak, circulate in the veins of the Church's body.' Indeed, it is crucial that Mercy and its Works circulate, move, flow, and furrow the roads where the Church walks in the world.

In this, spazio + spadoni with OPERA **M** and the dissemination tool, the reEvolution of the Works of Mercy, provides an important contribution. In concrete terms, they help us to never forget this human and spiritual urgency that is Mercy, they collaborate in keeping our continuous learning about the Works fruitful, always trying to update them, they foster the understanding of the profound intimate meaning of the Works imbued with the synthesis of spirit and practice.

To this fundamental dimension, a sphere of great need must be added in which the experience of spazio + spadoni is expressed, providing its own contribution in supporting the universal and planetary dimension of Mercy, as an experience that is fulfilled and regenerated every day thanks to the richness of gestures, actions, thoughts and prayers that are original and unique, because they are rich expressions of the variety of our world.

In fact, OPERA **M** on the one hand disseminates but on the other draws from the many wonderful presences, alive with virtuous life, that are present in so many parts of the world, even far away from Italy, and that receive and will receive this publication.

It is in this reciprocal exchange between the willingness to give strength to the Works of Mercy and the ability to welcome the fruits of these same Works that come from the experiences scattered around the world, that OPERA **M** di spazio + spadoni involved me in my brief but intense visit to Noto in Sicily in the summer of 2023. In the beautiful monastery of Santa Maria scala del Paradiso, they were talking about the reEvolution of the works of mercy and in this insightful narrative, I felt like a brother in the journey and, as far as I can, a fellow traveller.

This publication, I was made aware, is the fruit of long meditation and reflection in prayer. It was constructed, then rethought, then rested, then finally rewritten by a group of people from various parts of the world. Each with their own history, expertise, mission. It is therefore part of a journey that does not end but rather pushes for new beginnings.

May this publication be an extra incentive to see, show and show each other the face of Mercy. We need it as individuals and feel the urgency as women and men on this community journey in which spazio + spadoni with OPERA **M** is participating.

**His Excellency the Most Reverend Fortunatus Nwachukwu**  
**Secretary of the Dicastery for Evangelisation**  
*Section for First Evangelisation and New Particular Churches*



# INTRODUCTION

This text and its contents were born out of the union of hearts of a small flock of women and men, inhabitants of spazio + spadoni from all over the world who gathered in the silence of a convent for a fortnight.

Animated by a profound missionary spirit, they wove their different cultures and experiences into a spirituality that generated the words of the works of mercy contained in this compendium.

Male and female religious congregations, presbyters, catechists, volunteers and social workers, together in this collective writing.

**Luigi Spadoni**

*Inhabitants of spazio + spadoni*

***We start with everyone to involve the next ones, we start with the next ones to involve everyone.***

***C. Andorlini***

# THE RE OF THE WORKS OF MERCY

## EVOLUTION



### What does spazio + spadoni do?

**1.** It promotes, initiates and accompanies “virtuous” processes involving charitable organizations and missionary congregations around the world to implement works of charity, in the name of Mercy.

It does so in particular with the project called **HIC SUM**.

**2.** It develops processes of renewed awareness and of learning capable of revealing how living the works of mercy is reEvolutionary in the lives of men and women, in every part of the world, from all walks of life and of all creeds.

It does so in particular with the proposal called **OPERA M**.

In this framework of meaning, it designs and constructs paths, actions and instruments, which have the desire, humble and grandiose at the same time, to make us capable, through the Works that are accomplished, of a “new spread of spiritual meaning” in and of life.

### Why does spazio + spadoni do this?

Because we deeply believe that the works of mercy, spiritual and corporal, if fully lived, may help us to be new men and women and they may be the compass that guides us on our journey towards the fullness of the Children of God.

For this reason, spazio + spadoni proposes these guidelines

- **To give dignity to people in the Works.** We are small men and women, but capable, through the works of mercy, of doing gigantic things; if we give spiritual meaning to our actions, the “potentially great”, which is proper to each and every one of us as children of God, regardless of belief, culture and class, will yield the salvific fruits promised by Jesus.
- **Pray the Works.** We must train our body and spirit to direct our steps on the path of the Works of mercy: without a constant prayer we will not be able to do so.
- **Universalize the Works.** The Works belong to everyone and dwell in everyone. The profound meaning contained in this thought must be expressed forcefully, so that every ear may understand and give awareness to do it. Universalizing the Works also means cooperating in the proclamation of the Good News through the concreteness of love in all the countries of the world where spazio + spadoni already operates and where it has not arrived yet.
- **Nurturing reciprocity through the Works.** spazio + spadoni believes that reciprocity is to be sought not so much and not only in acting reciprocally with practical actions of solidarity, but by uniting, to the works of doing, the spiritual sense that comes from advising, teaching, admonishing, consoling, forgiving, enduring and praying.

In adhering to these guidelines, we are called to carry out **spiritual reEvolution** in a world that is struggling more and more to build a *way of doing in the spirit*. The more dignity there is, the more reciprocity we build. The more we pray to the Works, the more the Lord will increase our capacity to generate in others (in everyone and, therefore, universally) the awareness of God’s mercy.

The more we make the Works universal, the more we give dignity to the work and to the being of each one. And finally, the more reciprocity that manifests itself in the world, the more we can truly be **reEvolutionary**.

# OPERA M'S GUIDE



## premise

The purpose of this document is to define the content, methodological and organizational infrastructure of OPERA **M**.

It is primarily and mainly aimed at the spazio + spadoni organization.

It is a document that allows you to understand OPERA **M** without claiming to "close" the definition, for this reason, it is to be understood as an evolving document that must be updated in relation to ongoing experiments.

## indices

<b>spazio + spadoni</b>	<b>1</b>	vision and mission
<b>OPERA M</b>	<b>2</b>	definition and content
<b>OPERA M</b>	<b>3</b>	structure and organization
<b>OPERA M</b>	<b>4</b>	the method
<b>OPERA M</b>	<b>5</b>	instruments and indications

# 1

## spazio + spadoni vision and mission

### spazio + spadoni at a glance

spazio + spadoni is an organization that carries out missionary actions by promoting the dissemination of the works of mercy (WoM). It was founded and wanted by Luigi Spadoni.

We deeply believe that spiritual and corporal WoM, if fully lived, help us to be new men and women and become the compass that guides us on our journey towards the fullness of the Children of God.

spazio + spadoni

- Promotes and accompanies virtuous processes involving charitable organizations and missionary congregations in many parts of the world in order to carry out works of charity, in the name of mercy.
- It develops processes of renewed awareness and of learning capable of revealing how living the works of mercy is reEvolutionary in the lives of men and women, in every part of the world, from all walks of life and of all creeds.
- It designs and builds paths, actions and tools, which have the desire, humble and grandiose at the same time, to make us capable, through the works that are carried out, of a new flood of spiritual meaning of human action.

### where it operates

spazio + spadoni has its headquarters in Italy, by the **Convent of San Cerbone** in Lucca. Here you can find lives and experiences of mercy and mission from all over the world; it is where the various initiatives and activities start from and are organized. The General Secretariat is located here, which is always active.

### the vision in one sentence

spazio + generates actions of **mercy** and **mission** all over the world.

### the mission in a nutshell

spazio + spadoni supports missionary congregations, promotes projects of mercy in mission lands, strengthens the cultural dimension of mission and mercy of charitable organizations, contributes to the promotion of WoM in the world.

# 2 OPERA M

CORPORAL

THERE ARE FOURTEEN WORKS OF MERCY

**Feed**  
the hungry

**Give drink**  
to the thirsty

**Clothe**  
the naked

**Host**  
pilgrims

**Visiting**  
the sick

**Visit**  
the prisoners

**Bury**  
the dead

OPERA M

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

OPERA M

## definition and content

It is the reEvolution of the works of mercy. It is the permanent instrument for the development of a strong and renewed thought of works in the world.

**Counsel**  
the doubters

**Teach**  
the ignorant

**Admonish**  
sinners

**Console**  
the afflicted

**Forgive**  
offenses

**Patiently put up with**  
troublesome people

**Pray to God for the** living  
and the dead

It was born from an urgency strongly felt by spazio + spadoni to reEvolve the concept of the work of mercy as a path that is always human and divine at the same time, and therefore, always spiritual as well as practical (or corporal). The rediscovery, or rather, the true reEvolution of the works must be found within this synthesis between the spiritual aspect and the practical act. Material acting must always be permeated by the spirit.

SPIRITUAL



**1 INVOKE**  
call upon  
the Spirit

**2 LISTEN**  
be quiet to open  
yourself up to listening

**3 MEET**  
be among people,  
among people

**4 LET'S OPERATE**  
acting  
the Works

**5 LET'S FLOOD**  
let's bring everyone  
to the WoM

## reEvolution means in terms of content

### Praying the works, for the works, with the works

We must train our body and spirit to direct our steps on the path of the WoM. Without a constant prayer, we will not be able to do this. Prayer is a gift and an action; praying is opening the communication with my deepest being and with God; praying questions the Spirit who, in turn, inspires and animates the WoM. Every action of OPERA **M** must be anticipated, prepared, asked for with prayer. If our actions with the WoM are not supported by prayer, it will lose its meaning and will not be able to generate real change. Those who act in OPERA **M** must be convinced that they are instruments in the hands of God and that they need Him in order to have dignity, purpose, and the power of action.

### Spreading the missionary spirit through mercy

To be capable of a missionary spirit, it is necessary

- to reach out to the other
- to welcome the other as if he were Jesus
- to recognize God's mercy
- to do as he did
- to proclaim and bear witness to Jesus with our lives

The WoM are the most effective instrument for manifesting God's infinite mercy.

### Re **universalize** the works in everyone in reciprocity

The works belong to everyone and are in everyone. We are small men and women, but each of us has inside him or her the ability, through the WoM, to do gigantic things. If we give spiritual meaning to our actions, the potentially great, which is proper to each and every one of us as children of God, regardless of creed, culture and class, will produce salvific fruits. The concept of universality, in this missionary vision, has the meaning of opening up, in order to know, understand and be able to build a new space of witness.

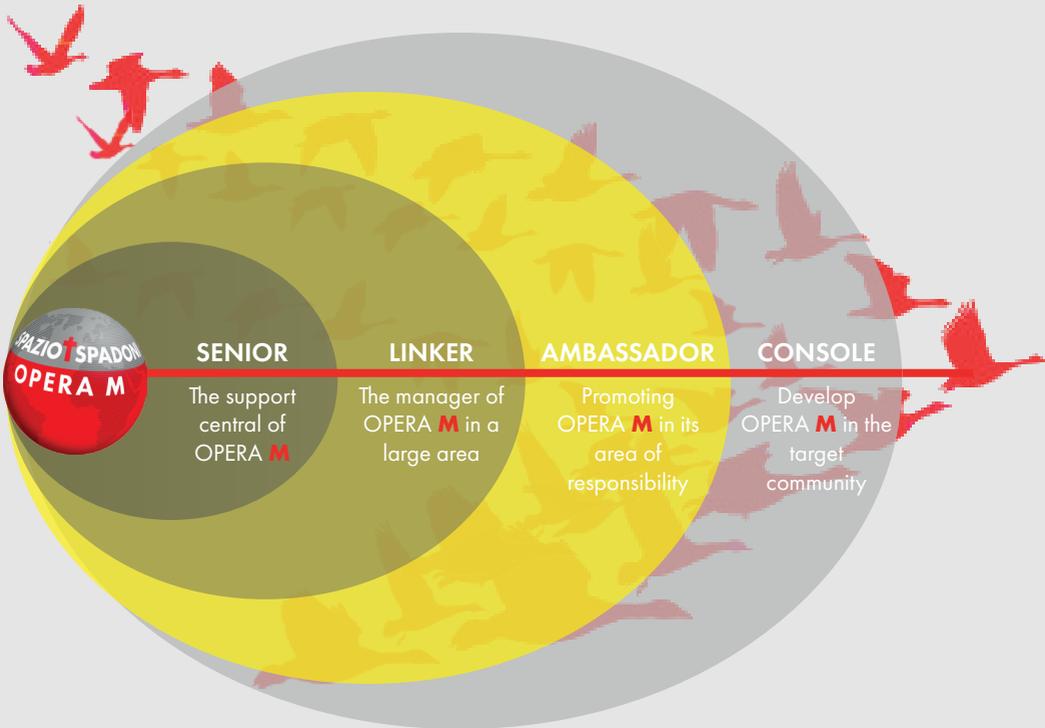
**The reEvolution of the works of mercy  
can be considered the charism of OPERA **M****

# 3 OPERA M

## organization

OPERA M adopts the *ethics of flocks*. It is organized, moves and grows with everyone's contribution, like the circling of birds in the skies, where each one flies in unison with the others to become part of a single body. It is the perfect balance of this cohesion that gives the sense and strength of the whole. Like the flock, OPERA M is not hierarchical but distributes among all the burden and honour of building the flight design in the sky. A virtuous system in which it is enough to follow simple rules to achieve a collective movement.

On a day-to-day basis, OPERA M makes use of an organizational support designed so that activities can proceed constantly, quickly and effectively, without overlapping roles and for the common good.



They are the central support of OPERA **M**. They meet at least once a month but are constantly in contact with each other, participate in the initiatives of spazio + spadoni, contribute to the specific training of the other levels of support (LINKER in particular). They have the obligation to be formed in the missionary spirit and in the WoM. They collaborate with the founder by defining the contents and methods to be used for the dissemination of the message of OPERA **M**.

He or she is the person in charge of OPERA **M** in a wide area that can also include several countries. He or she must have some necessary skills and characteristics

- to know spazio + spadoni , **HIC SUM** and OPERA **M**
- to know the WoM, to pray to them, to live their spirit by witnessing to them
- to know the territory and how to relate by activating processes of communion and synodality in relation to the civil world (authorities and leaders of various organizations) and religious one (bishops, parish priests, congregations and religious groups)
- to have an open mind to all people and young people, knowing how to involve people with leadership skills; to have skills in assertive communication, problem solving, conflict management with a view to fraternal correction
- to know the social economy and know how to design and organize
- to know the civil laws and religious traditions of the area
- to know the charisms of the Congregations and Groups which they have relationships with

The LINKER maintains constant relations (weekly/fortnightly) with spazio + spadoni and the SENIORS whom he or she receives its initial training from. He or she periodically organizes the Territorial Forum in agreement with spazio + spadoni. The LINKER identifies tools and takes care of their distribution and maintains constant relations with the AMBASSADORS - maximum 12 - whom he is connected to, taking care of their initial training and organizing their training on the WoM every six months.

He is the figure delegated by the Religious Congregation or by another Organization to promote OPERA **M** in the territory of its competence, more or less vast; at the same time, the appointment of a substitute is also requested. The AMBASSADOR chooses a CONSOLE for each community in his or her territory. A similar support function is provided to other groups.

The AMBASSADOR must have some necessary skills and characteristics

- to know spazio + spadoni, the organization of OPERA **M** with the different figures, roles and functions
- to know the WoM, to pray to them and to live their spirit by witnessing to it
- to know the territory, the activities present, the Associations, the people and the national regulations, in particular those for the protection of minors

He carries out a basic training supervised by the Linker and/or by the central structure of spazio + spadoni.

He can also delve into aspects such as

- relational skills to use servant leadership in synodality
- skills for design and organization
- communication skills at various levels
- sense of service, humility and creativity

The AMBASSADOR

- collaborates both with the reference LINKER and with the CONSOLES of the Communities
- interacts with other AMBASSADORS
- enhances the Charism of her own Congregation/Organization with the WoM, favouring integration with the spirit and action of OPERA **M**
- coordinates with the CONSOLES operational strategies and relations with priests, catechists and other figures in the communities
- identifies the possibility of developing HIC SUM projects
- follows the **HIC SUM** projects of his/her Congregation/Organization
- participates in the coordination for the organization of the Zone Forums
- promotes and takes care of the training of the CONSOLES, also with the support of the LINKER and/or the central structure of spazio + spadoni
- takes care of the editing of news and articles for the Magazine "Mission" by the CONSOLES

The AMBASSADOR maintains constant relations with spazio + spadoni and the LINKERS.

He organizes, periodically, meetings with the territorial CONSOLES.

# CONSOLE

He or she is the figure, appointed by the Congregation/Organization, in charge of promoting OPERA **M** in the community of reference and in the territorial context where it operates. He or she is the first designated to operate in the territory through OPERA **M**, of which he or she is the protagonist, knowing how to recognize specific needs with the community, identify projects and evaluate the results.

The CONSOLE takes care of the relations between OPERA **M** and the parish, the Associations, the Bodies that may be present on site.

The CONSOLE must have some necessary skills and characteristics

- to know spazio + spadoni, the organization of OPERA **M** with the different figures (roles and functions) and be aware of his or her own role
- to know the WoM and the spirit that animates them; to pray to them and to live their spirit by bearing witness to it
- to know the territory, the activities present, the Associations, the people
- to develop a **sense of belonging** to OPERA **M** and to the spazio + spadoni network
- living the attitude of the pedagogy of the street, getting alongside, listening, working in unity, together
- collaborate with the AMBASSADOR and LINKER of reference as well as other **CONSOLES**
- identifies the possibility of developing **HIC SUM** projects in his community and constantly monitors their implementation
- strengthens the Charism of the Congregation/Organization he or she belongs to through the activities necessary for the development of OPERA **M** and the WoM
- coordinates, in collaboration with the AMBASSADOR, operational strategies and relations with priests and local ecclesial realities (catechists, choirs, schools, families, etc.), thus allowing the whole community to be reborn through the WoM that become **Community WoM**
- shares the experiences of OPERA **M** that arise from common life, in creativity, welcoming, with passion and patience, whoever God wants to put in his path
- participates in the organization of the local Forum
- takes care of the drafting of information and articles for the online Magazine Mission and communicates through local media (newspapers, radio, etc.) the news that have arisen in the area
- undertakes to acquire specific skills for the works carried out and for the social enterprise generated through **HIC SUM**

The CONSOLE conducts basic training - promoted and supervised by the AMBASSADOR - both theoretical and practical where he or she deepens relational skills to use servant leadership in the synodality, skills for planning and organizing, communication skills at various levels and a sense of service, humility and creativity.

The CONSOLE maintains constant contact with the AMBASSADOR from whom he receives his initial training.

The method in OPERA M is fundamental. It orients both the **attitude** of the operator towards the Works and **how** these Works are formed and shaped in the process. A process to be understood as active and in motion, from raising awareness in the territories to the construction of works of merciful community<sup>1</sup>.

The ATTITUDE is for OPERA M the **approach** and the HOW is the **work in the field**.

## APPROACH

The reference model of the OPERA M method is based on 4 key concepts

### SYNODALITY

Synodality means building reflection, synthesis and proposals together with others, not as a simple gesture of respect but as an irreplaceable element of communion and sharing of the path of OPERA M.

Works of mercy are not generated except with a permanent desire for sharing, which requires time for mutual listening; care of relationships; ability to question one's own certainties in a true and generating encounter with the thought of the other.

### ACCOMPANIMENT

**The work is not done, it is lived together.**

Accompanying means sharing the work as it unfolds, placing oneself in a condition of reciprocal and always new discovery with the work itself and the people who animate it.

To do this, we need to become aware of our own fragility and insecurity towards a reality that we can only truly understand through the experience of others. Only in this way it becomes an exchange between the fragile people, which places each one in the condition of giving and receiving at the same time.

<sup>1</sup> The Works of the merciful community, however, are "handcrafted": none of them is the same as the other; our hands can shape them with a common method, but each one acquires a different shape. And this is why we can give life to a true cultural reEvolution starting from having a methodological reference that is orienting and then acting and building a different "artifact" each time, with simplicity of gestures that know how to reach the body and the spirit at the same time, that is, people's lives.

## PRACTICED FRATERNITY

Fraternity does not have the same meaning as brotherhood and even less as solidarity. It is a transcendent concept that is based on a universal belonging.

- A fraternal society by its nature is one of solidarity. But a society of solidarity may not be fraternal.
- Brotherhood is horizontal, it comes from below: we are united by a bond because we belong to the same community or the same species. **In fraternity, the horizontal dimension is combined with the vertical dimension**; people recognize themselves, or try to recognize themselves, in a common divine fatherhood.

In OPERA **M**, the approach to fraternity therefore means a conscious predisposition to feel that we are children of one father. This is why we speak of fraternity **practiced**.

## THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE DIGNITY OF ALL PEOPLE

We are all small men and women, but if we give spiritual meaning to our actions, we become capable, through the WoM, of doing gigantic things, regardless of our beliefs, culture and social class.

And **everyone does WoM**, often without realizing it. No one is so poor that they cannot perform one of the 14 works of mercy. For this reason, in OPERA **M** there is no possibility of doing WoM if we do not make everyone aware of their “potential greatness” in participating in the diffusion of the WoM in the world.

### FIELDWORK

Fieldwork seen from a methodological point of view is articulated on 2 perspectives: that of **vision** and that of **practice**.

The **vision** consists in seeing OPERA **M** not only as a process linked to the immediate objective - the WoM specifies - but also as an instrument that nourishes, that takes care of the **fertility**, the realization and the propagation of possible works; a path therefore also aimed at **multiplying possible beginnings**.

The **practice** consists in the style and rhythm that we decide to give to the development of OPERA **M** processes.

- Reference is made to **support** figures and functions defined in the “organization” chapter.
- A **style of proximity** is adopted, considering the neighbour as the first person or group to be involved, to be made aware, by constructing a comprehensible and common language.
- A **generative propagation** is activated on the territories, asking to participate and make a contribution to OPERA **M**; freely, with varying intensities and geometries in relation to people, place, conditions.
- We go **further** by building a process that has a collective but unique and specific look in each community and territory, in a path that involves step by step.

## THE TOOLBOX

spazio + spadoni has created and constantly feeds a plurality of operational tools and indications/suggestions available to everyone to promote OPERA M at different levels.

Most of these “tools” are multilingual.

Go to the appropriate section of the portal to see the updated composition of the “toolbox”.

## THE FORM OF OPERA M

It is represented by a hand. Each finger of the hand leaves an **IMPRINT** that recalls a concept considered necessary and essential while working so that the action takes on a sense of fullness and is in return capable of positively influencing others.

The 5 **imprints** make up the **Shape of OPERA M**

- Invoke
- Listen
- Meet
- We operate
- We flood

To learn more about the form of OPERA M, you can visit the dedicated section on the website.

## THE SYMBOL

The scarf is a distinctive element of the OPERA M volunteer and symbolizes their belonging, identity and value of the group. It consists of a square of fabric to be worn rolled up around the neck.

Wearing the scarf means joining and promoting merciful service, spiritual growth and commitment to spreading the works of mercy.

## THE COLOURS OF OPERA M

- **RED** is the color of energy and strength. It is a push for the re**E**volution of the works of mercy tag.
- **WHITE** always represents a beginning: a blank page on which to start writing our story together.
- **GREY** is the colour of prayer and fraternal reciprocity at OPERA M.

## THE MOTTO

**"God's mercy is an action".**

And the answer is:

**"Always!"**

The motto is expressed every time we say hello.

## PRAYER OF THE ARTISANS OF THE WORKS OF MERCY

Lord make me a craftsman  
of your mercy,  
so that,  
through corporal and spiritual works of mercy,  
I bring the tenderness of your love  
to those in need.  
Amen!

## JACULATORY

Spirit of mercy,  
here I am,  
animating our works



# THE IMPRINTS OF OPERA M



## 1. INVOKE **call upon the Spirit**

In the morning, when you wake up.... at the beginning of your business.... or when you realize that you are called to a work of mercy... close your eyes for a moment and ask for the assistance of the Holy Spirit and begin to pray the Works.

If you are a believer, remind Jesus of his promise: *"I am going away, but I will send you the Holy Spirit."* It's time to ask the Holy Spirit! If you are not a believer, remind yourself of the immaterial, spiritual dimension that you possess in any case, the underlying Spirit that guides your life and that you want to grasp in the people and situations you meet.

There is no need for many words: to immerse oneself in the Spirit, a brief formula can be enough: **"Spirit of mercy, here I am, animate my works"**.

### **PRAYER** **of the artisans of the works of mercy**

Lord make me a craftsman  
of your mercy,  
so that,  
through corporal and spiritual works of mercy,  
I bring the tenderness of your love  
to those in need.  
Amen!

## **2. LISTEN** **be quiet to open yourself up to listening**

There is a whole that is much richer than appearance: pay attention not only to the symptoms but to the signs that talk about the person, his or her suffering and his or her needs beyond the evident, real, material manifestation of the moment. Let him or her speak, let him or her tell.

Listening is not passive: try to empathize, to put yourself in his or her shoes, to suffer with him or her, to feel what he or she feels. Whenever possible, get help from the other person to feel at least a shadow of what he or she is feeling. Respectfully.... Because we certainly don't want to invade a sphere and a moment of experience that is absolutely personal.

**Learning to tune in to others is the true grace that underlies spiritual works of mercy.**

### **look each other in the eye**

Try to read the person in front of you in depth. Meet his or her gaze, putting yourself at his or her height; not from the bottom up, not from the top down, but at the height of him or her: an encounter where it is immediately understood that there is no one who gives or one who receives, but there is only sharing, communion, mercy. And, if you see that it is the case, get closer to the other person even physically: a light contact, a caress, a hug are a very concrete way to cancel distances.

## **3. MEET** **be among people, among people**

Get involved, participate, share each other's experiences. Look at the other in an open, welcoming way.

### **say hello to those you meet, introduce yourself**

If you want to go beyond a purely formal relationship, if you really want to get in touch with the other, it is necessary to get to know each other; And the first step is to overcome aseptic anonymity by calling each other by name, talking to each other. The other person must also know that you are not just an "operator on duty", he must be able to grasp in the knowledge of your name the essence of you, of a relationship that is not just performance.

Without forcing, with spontaneity and sympathy.

## 4. LET'S OPERATE

### **unveil the Works**

Train yourself to recognize the Works in the situations and people you meet: you will discover that they are implemented much more than you think, by everyone, in a simple and often unconscious way.

The parable of the talents says that God has given at least one to each one! It will be up to us to help others discover their own, to reveal to each one his or her own potential to do works of mercy.

*With the encounter, the YOU become WE*

### **acting the Works**

Faith without works is dead! The Works of Mercy must be acted, we cannot limit ourselves to invoking, listening, meeting. The spirit of mercy has no hands, it needs ours. It is necessary to give substance to the impulse of the heart.

### **in the plural!**

Acting the Works is first of all a personal act, which we can all do: all it takes is a minimum of commitment, will, conviction; and the courage to take the plunge, to experiment.

However, acting the Works can also be a common act, done together with others. This makes it easier, less tiring. And it is also more effective: operating in the plural allows us to do better, to give continuity to the action and to multiply the effects.

### **let's communicate joy!**

If we feel that mercy is at work, we can only be smiling! Not a silly, printed smile, but the gaze of someone who lives the beauty of the experiences and people he meets. Smiling "inside" is important to better face the hardships of the Works that affect us.

And, if possible, we try to be contagious: we also help others smile.

## 5. LET'S FLOOD **let's bring everyone to the WoM**

We involve, we share, we share the spirit of the WoM with others: no one is so poor that he has nothing to offer or so rich that he never needs to receive. Let us commit ourselves to accompanying, walking alongside, creating together.

We must be not only "artisans", "workers" but also "generators" of WoM!

### **let's say goodbye with the "motto"**

A simple goodbye or a hello is functional but trivial: if we have built a relationship of mercy, we can try to address a greeting that also expresses a message of trust, of hope, as well as a thanksgiving to God.

With Opera **M**'s motto

**"God's mercy is an action"**.

And the answer is

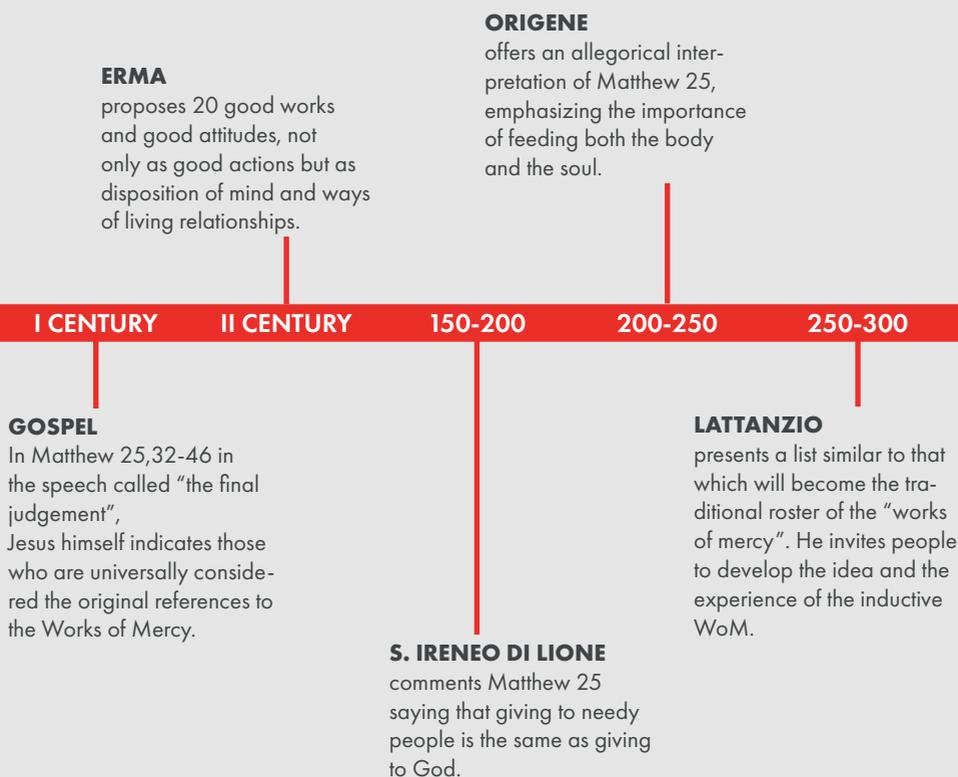
**"Always"**.

# TIMELINE OF THE WORKS OF MERCY

This timeline offers an overview of the evolution of the Christian thought about the works of mercy, pointing out how this concept developed and enriched over the centuries.

**By this temporal process of events, we also want to remark the importance that the Works of Mercy had in the history of the path of the Church.**

**spazio + spadoni walks this path to contribute, in a very humble way, to the evolutive process of and about the works of mercy.**



# TIMELINE OF THE WORKS OF MERCY

## **S. GIOVANNI CRISOSTOMO**

introduces the concept of "Sacrament of the brother".

## **CESAREO D'ARLES**

reflects upon charity, emphasizing the importance of giving despite personal limitations.

**III CENTURY**

## **CIPRIANO DI CARTAGINE**

in his treaty, emphasizes that the prayer must always be accompanied by good works.

**347-407**

**354-430**

## **S. AGOSTINO DI IPPONA**

states the two forms of works of mercy, corporal and spiritual, with the concept of "giving and forgiving" and groups them in three categories: reconciliation, attention to the spiritual needs of the others and prayer.

**470-542**

## **POPE GREGORIO MAGNO**

attests to the spiritual and material interpretation of the works of mercy, with reference to Giobbe 29,12-13.

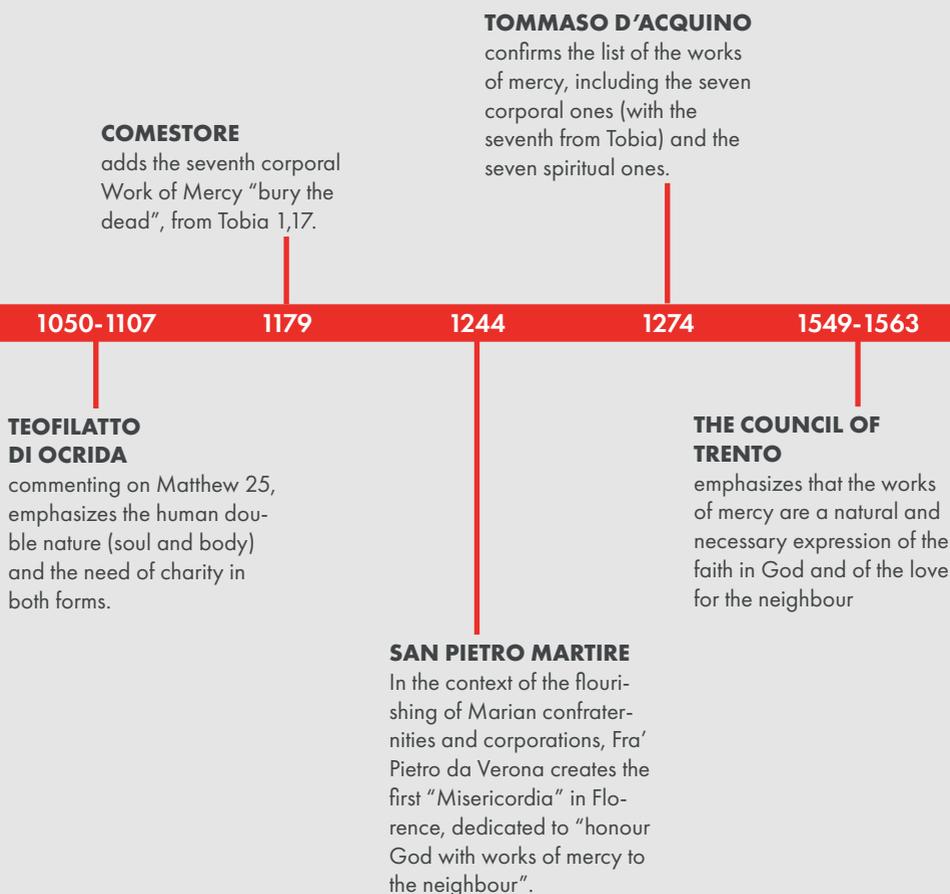
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# TIMELINE OF THE WORKS OF MERCY

## THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

affirms that the works of mercy are charitable actions that help people in their needs, both corporal and spiritual.

1908

### POPE PIO X

in the Catechism of the Catholic Church summarizes the 14 works of mercy discussed in the National Catechetical Congress in 1889.

1992

### POPE GIOVANNI PAOLO II

approved the Catechism of the Catholic Church and we can find the 14 works of mercy in their final form in 1995 and in the section Formulas of Catholic Doctrine.

1992

### SPAZIO SPADONI

On September it promotes OPERA M through the Forums on the reEvolution of the works of mercy in Italy- Noto/Sicily and in Africa- Benin/Cotonou, Burkina Faso/Bobo-Dioulasso.

### POPE BENEDETTO XVI

Motu Proprio for the approval and publication of the Compendium of the Catholic Church.

2005

2015

### POPE FRANCESCO

on 13th March, he proclaims the extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy by the papal bull Misericordiae Vultus.

2023

# WORKS OF MERCY

## GOD IS MERCY

Works of mercy, corporal and spiritual, are at the heart of the believer's life. In fact, mercy does not only come from a feeling of compassion towards those in distress or from an ethical imperative of solidarity, but it is the very love of God that fills us and makes us overflow towards others, because God is Mercy. Indeed, 'mercy, in the biblical sense, is much more than an aspect of God's love. Mercy is like the very being of God. Three times in front of Moses, God pronounces his name. The first time, he says: 'I am who I am' (Ex 3:14). The second time: 'I will give grace to whom I will give grace, and I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy'' (Ex 33:19). The rhythm of the sentence is the same, but grace and mercy take the place of being. For God, to be what he is, it is to do grace and mercy. This confirms the third proclamation of God's name: 'The Lord, God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in grace and faithfulness' (Ex 34:6)' (Taizé Community). Pope Francis affirms: 'Mercy in Sacred Scripture is the key word to indicate God's action towards us. He does not merely affirm his love but makes it visible and tangible. Love, on the other hand, could never be an abstract word. By its very nature, it is concrete life: intentions, attitudes, behaviour that occur in everyday action'.

## 'MERCIFUL LIKE THE FATHER' (LK 6:36)

If, therefore, God's mercy precedes all our mercy, the works of mercy, however, are our way of responding to God's mercy. 'Mercy is not only the action of the Father but becomes the criterion for understanding who his true children are. In short, we are called to live by mercy, because we were the first ones to receive mercy' (Pope Francis).

Filled therefore with God's mercy, we must pour out mercy to our neighbour. In her wisdom, the Church has always given concreteness to the command to be merciful. Already the Catechism of Christian Doctrine of Pius X enumerated seven works of corporal mercy, six of which were taken from Matthew chapter 25 (Mt 25:35-36). In fact, the Lord wanted to identify himself with the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, the imprisoned: 'As often as you did it to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me...; as often as you did not do it to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did not do it to me' (Mt 25:31-46); 'For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, he cannot love God whom he has not seen. This is the commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother' (1 Jn 4:20-21).

Pope Francis exhorts us: 'It is my fervent desire that the Christian people reflect... on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. It will be a way to awaken our conscience which is often drowsy before the drama of poverty and to enter more and more into the heart of the Gospel, where the poor are the privileged ones of divine mercy. Jesus' preaching presents us these works of mercy so that we can understand whether we are, or we are not living as his disciples... We cannot escape the words of the Lord: and by them we will be judged... In each of these 'little ones' Christ himself is present. His flesh becomes visible again as a battered, wounded, flagellated, undernourished, fleeing body..., to be recognized, touched and carefully attended by us.'

### **'BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL' (MT 5:7)**

And he who is merciful will be happy. Jesus announces a true beatitude of mercy: 'Blessed (makàrioi) are the merciful, for they shall find mercy' (Mt 5:7). Makàrios derives from makàr, an ancient term indicating divine happiness, the very condition of God: but at the time of the Gospels, it is the only term available to indicate a 'happy' man in the broadest sense of the term. 'To the merciful, Jesus promises nothing more than what they already experience: mercy... What more could God give to the merciful? Mercy is the fullness of God and of humans. The merciful people already live by the very life of God... It is mercy that is the purest reflection of God in a human life. 'It is by the mercy towards your neighbour, that you resemble God' (Basil the Great). Mercy is the humanity of God. It is also the divine future of man' (Taizé Community).

**Carlo Miglietta**

The foulard is a distinctive element of the OPERA **M** volunteer and symbolizes the group's membership, identity and value. It consists of a square of cloth to be worn rolled, on itself, around the neck. Wearing the foulard signifies adherence to and promotion of merciful service, spiritual growth and commitment to spreading the works of mercy.

**outside**  
**of a celebration or  
of a particular rite**  
for a quick or "secular" delivery

The person who hands over the foulard calls out, by his or her own name, to the new volunteer.

He responds:  
**"HIC SUM"**.

At that point the foulard is handed over by having it worn and, if appropriate, the giver says:  
**"GOD'S MERCY IS IN ACTION"** .

The recipient of the foulard responds:  
**"ALWAYS!"** .

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**within**  
**of a celebration or  
of a particular rite**  
for a more official delivery

During a religious or secular ceremony or during Holy Mass, after the **Creed**, the person handing over the foulard calls out his name to the individual volunteers.

He stands up and, from his seat, answers:  
**"HIC SUM"**.

Then they move forward and line up with the other called volunteers in front of the person handing out the foulards.

When all have been called and are standing in line, together they recite (reading):  
**"LORD, MAKE ME AN ARTISAN OF YOUR MERCY SO THAT, BY THE SPIRITUAL AND CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY, I COULD BE ABLE TO OFFER THE TENDERNESS OF YOUR LOVE TO ALL THOSE WHO ARE IN NEED"** .

The people answer:  
**"AMEN"**.

As he hands over the foulard, he says to each one:  
**"GOD'S MERCY IS IN ACTION"**.

The volunteer answers:  
**"ALWAYS!"**  
and wears the foulard.

The Liturgy goes on with the Prayer of the Faithful or the ceremony (religious or secular) goes on.



# SAINT JOSEPH

## Presentation of the protector of spazio + spadoni

With humble hearts and gratitude to God, we inform you that we have chosen and decided to entrust the work of spazio + spadoni to the powerful patronage of St. Joseph, former patron of the universal Church, Christ's bride, silent and faithful guardian of Jesus, the worker of Mercy.

We invite all the inhabitants of spazio + spadoni family to celebrate him every year, on 19 March, the day dedicated to him.

## Prayers to St Joseph, protector of spazio + spadoni

Father and Creator of the world  
grant us, through the intercession  
and the example of St Joseph  
to be faithful to the responsibilities you entrust to us  
and to become artisans of the reEvolution of works of  
mercy.

Grant us to always enjoy His protection  
so that we may intercept  
all the sufferings of the world  
of which the Crucifix is the most convincing Icon.  
Amen





# The Forums of spazio + spadoni

The first edition of the “Fare Spazio” Convention took place in September 2021 at the Convent of San Cerbone (LU), home of spazio + spadoni. That year’s theme was Reciprocity. Fare Spazio was conceived as an in-depth study of a central theme, declined in different facets according to the speakers’ area of intervention and discussed through seminars, meetings, working groups, cultural activities, readings, visits and informal situations.

## Fare Spazio has a double meaning

- creating a privileged temporal space where everyone contributes, according to one’s own possibilities, to the growth and development of the objectives, tools and visions of spazio + spadoni.
- creating a space, also personal but in a community context, where reviewing and rethinking and structuring one’s own commitment to values, one’s own sense of mission, civil commitment and civic and social service.

The event has always been held in a dual mode, **in presence** and **online** to widen participation to all the inhabitants of spazio + spadoni who are physically distant.

The second edition, ‘Fare Spazio to Courage’, was also held at the Convent of San Cerbone, while the third, ‘Fare Spazio to the reEvolution of Works of Mercy’ was organized at the Sanctuary of the Madonna della Scala, in Noto, Sicily. His Excellency the Most Reverend Monsignor Salvatore Rumeo and the Sicilian territory immediately showed great sensitivity to the spazio+spadoni projects, a bond strengthened by the activation of several **HIC SUM** projects with the local Misericordie and by the honorary citizenship of the municipality of Rosolini conferred on Luigi Spadoni.

The reEvolution of works of mercy is a central theme of the mission of spazio + spadoni, which in 2023, promoted and supported two conventions in Africa, namely in Benin and Burkina Faso. The conventions, which in the African continent took the name ‘Forum’, were a great success in terms of participation. The aim is to hold at least one of them in each country hosting **HIC SUM** projects of spazio + spadoni.



# THE MERCY OF GOD IS AT WORK...

This booklet, as mentioned in the introduction, is the fruit of a collective experience. And that is what it wants to remain. Therefore, this text is already ready for a new elaboration, for a new in-depth study, **in the spirit of an authentic reEvolution**, because it is open to everyone's sharing and enrichment. Its common denominator is the fraternal friendship among the inhabitants of spazio + spadoni, who desire nothing more than making the Gospel fulfilled and present through the Works of Mercy and **making the content of OPERA M universal**.

Spazio + spadoni wants to share, in reciprocity and with courage, this missionary path of love towards our brothers and sisters all over the world...

... **ALWAYS!**







# THE JOURNEY INTO MERCY CONTINUES



**IT** - [Carlo Miglietta – Le Opere di Misericordia](#)

**EN** - [Carlo Miglietta – Works of Mercy](#)

**FR** - [Carlo Miglietta – Oeuvres de miséricorde](#)



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# THE MERCY OF GOD IS AT WORK ALWAYS



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## SPAZIO†SPADONI

GENERATES ACTIONS OF MISSION AND MERCY IN THE WORLD