

ReEvolution of Works of Mercy in Our Church and Society

I extend my heartfelt blessings to all participants in this significant convention, including the priests, religious men and women, catechists, members of the Focolare movement, and all the lay faithful, under the guidance of spazio + spadoni. May God's grace be upon you as you delve into the profound theme of the "ReEvolution of Works of Mercy in Our Church and the Entire Society of Today."

In these times, as we reflect on the essence of the 14 Works of Mercy - both corporal and spiritual - it is crucial to revisit their relevance in our lives and their potential to transform us into new men and women, truly embodying the fullness of our identity as children of God.

The corporal works of mercy, as we know, focus on tangible acts of charity: feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick, visiting the imprisoned, and burying the dead. These acts are the very embodiment of our faith in action, representing how we are called to serve Christ in those most in need.

Equally important are the spiritual works of mercy: instructing the ignorant, counselling the doubtful, admonishing sinners, bearing wrongs patiently, forgiving offences willingly, comforting the afflicted, and praying for the living and the dead. These guide us in nurturing our spiritual growth and that of others, ensuring that our actions are rooted in love and compassion.

The reEvolution of these works of mercy is not merely about performing these acts but allowing them to become the compass by which we navigate our journey towards spiritual maturity and fulfilment as children of God. Our society today, more than ever, is in dire need of such guidance - a reminder of the Gospel values that call us to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.

As we engage in this convention, we are reminded of the words from the Gospel of Matthew 25:31-40, where the final judgment is depicted. Here, Christ, our judge, identifies Himself with the least of our brothers and sisters. "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." These words call us to see Christ in every person, especially in those who are suffering, marginalised, or forgotten.

The motto of this gathering, "God's Mercy is in Action," serves as a powerful reminder that our faith must be lived out through deeds. The works of mercy are not just charitable actions but expressions of God's love for humanity, manifested through our willingness to serve and uplift others. They challenge us to move beyond our comfort zones, to embrace a life of selflessness, and to become beacons of hope in a world often overshadowed by despair.

In re-evaluating these works, we are also called to adapt them to the challenges of our times. The global issues we face today - poverty, inequality, climate change, and the ongoing struggles for justice and peace - demand that we not only perform these works but also advocate for systemic change that addresses the root causes of these problems. Our mercy must be both immediate and far-reaching, extending to all areas of life.

Moreover, the spiritual dimension of the works of mercy urges us to foster a culture of encounter and dialogue. Instructing the ignorant, counselling the doubtful, and admonishing sinners are acts that require patience, understanding, and love. In a world increasingly divided

by ideology and conflict, these acts of spiritual mercy can heal wounds, build bridges, and promote reconciliation.

As we immerse ourselves in this discussion, let us remember that the re-evolution of works of mercy begins with us. It starts with a personal commitment to live out these values in our daily lives, inspiring others through our example. Let us be the instruments of God's mercy, transforming our communities and, ultimately, the world.

I encourage you to embrace this reEvolution with open hearts and minds. Let us be vigilant in our practice of mercy, recognising it as the path that leads us to the fullness of life in Christ. As we go forth from this convention, may we carry with us the conviction that by living out the works of mercy, we are not only fulfilling our Christian duty but also building the Kingdom of God here on earth.

May God bless you all abundantly as you embark on this journey of mercy, guided by His love and grace.

Yours in Christ service,

Most rev Philip A. Anyolo
METROPOLITAN ARCHBISHOP OF NAIROBI