

This week will focus on the **Corporal Work of Mercy of Giving Drink to the Thirsty** and the **Spiritual Work to Share Knowledge**. The following is taken from Fr. Henry Charles – “*I thirst*” is the shortest of the Jesus’ last “words” or sayings from the cross. But what did it mean for him, the God-Man, to thirst? It’s easy to understand it from the side of his human nature. Near the end of his agony, Jesus experienced dehydration from sweating, bleeding, shock and asphyxia. The combined effect of this produced a thirst beyond description. But what did it mean from the side of his divine nature? To contemplate this is to move directly into the heart of the paschal mystery. “*My soul thirsts for God, the living God,*” the psalmist cries (Ps 42:2). But by far the deeper mystery is that the living God also thirsts for human beings. Jesus’ last word is our first, primal, human word. A child is born crying and thirsty, and from this first expression is the earliest proof that we cannot satisfy ourselves; we are not self-sustaining beings. Thirst is our first expression of personal *and* social need. Lungs may breathe on their own, but thirst requires that something must be done on our behalf. A breast or a bottle must be given. Later, a tap must be turned on, a well dug, water itself purified. Hunger and thirst are used interchangeably (sometimes as a unitary expression) to signify fundamental needs of our being – potential to be fulfilled, desire to be satisfied...In paschal terms, he (Jesus) was dried out, so that we might have a new immersion in life. The water flowing from his side is what relieves the world’s drought, and gives back life to our dehydrated souls.” In what ways do you thirst? While we all “thirst” in many ways, we also all have the capacity to give drink to others through sharing knowledge – experiential and information knowledge about God. You don’t have to be a priest or have a degree in Theology to share knowledge of God. God reveals God’s self in limitless ways. Through prayer, nature, family, community worship, Eucharist, Reconciliation, we come to know God and it is that first-hand knowledge of God’s love, mercy, forgiveness and peace that the majority of us are asked to share. Now at St. Patrick’s, there are many ways we live out these Works of Mercy. Our St. Vincent de Paul society provides funds for families in need who cannot pay their water, gas, or electrical bill. In a very real way we can provide drink to those who thirst. However, we also provide many educational opportunities to share knowledge and quench the thirst for faith to children and adults alike. St. Patrick’s Religious Formation program educates 704 children and St. Patrick’s School educates 738 both from preschool to 8th grade. Our youth ministry program engages middle school and high school students in many aspects of our Catholic faith, including scripture and catechism classes, service trips and projects, faith sharing and socials. We also have a strong adult formation program. We provide adults many ways to gain a deeper understanding of their Catholic faith from RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) for those wanting to join the church to scripture classes, marriage enrichment, faith and fellowship groups, and many more.

This Lent, reflect upon... “What do I thirst for?” and “How can I provide drink and knowledge to others?” We pray that quenching starts to be satisfied.