

Introduction:

On November 4, 2017, we learned of the news of the tragic death of Deacon Patrick Logsdon, the program manager of Anthony House, a transitional home for homeless men in Roosevelt run the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. Even at the time of his death, he was carrying out the Gospel message of caring for the poor as he has done faithfully for 33 years. Bishop John Barres preached this homily during Deacon Logsdon's funeral on November 9.

Let us seek healing and comfort in the one true God during this time of great loss.

BISHOP BARRES' FUNERAL HOMILY FOR DEACON PATRICK LOGSDON, NOVEMBER 9, 2017

Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Church, Roosevelt

In the history of the global mission of Mercy of the Catholic Church in the World, we speak of seven Corporal Works of Mercy and Seven Spiritual Works of Mercy.

The seven Corporal Works of Mercy are: 1)Feed the hungry 2)Give drink to the thirsty 3)Clothe the naked 4)Shelter the homeless 5)Visit the sick 6)Visit the imprisoned 7)Bury the dead.

The seven Spiritual Works of Mercy are: 1)Counsel the doubtful 2)Instruct the ignorant 3)Admonish sinners 4)Comfort the afflicted 5)Forgive offenses [I think the paralyzed NYPD Detective Steven McDonald and Deacon Patrick Logsdon would have been on the same page about this] 6)Bear wrongs patiently 7)Pray for the living and the dead.

The Road to Emmaus story from Luke 24 is a good image of how the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy are expressed in the mission of the Church to the World.

The Risen Christ is always at the center of every corporal and spiritual work of mercy in history. The healing light that radiates from the glorified wounds of Christ touches both the Good Samaritan who initiates the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy and the suffering who receive and benefit from the works of mercy.

The missionary disciples on the Road to Emmaus ask: “Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?”

It is the Good Samaritan heart burning with the Sacred Scriptures that practices the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy in the most humble and most effective Christocentric way.

The missionary disciples on the Road to Emmaus recognize the Risen Christ when “he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them.”

The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy in the World are immersed in the Fires of Charity of the Body and Blood of Christ.

These Works of Mercy are an expression of the Rhythm of the Mass: the Rhythm of the Liturgy of the Word, the Rhythm of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the Rhythm of the Paschal Mystery and the Rhythm of the Sacrifice of the Mass.

In the history of the mission of the Church from the very beginning, there are great saints and mystics of the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.

We think today of St. Francis of Assisi whose stigmatic wounds were an expression of the Risen Christ’s love for a suffering and wounded humanity. We think of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Louis de Marillac and Blessed Frederic Ozanam, the Founder of our global St. Vincent de Paul Society which inspires and guides the mission of St. Anthony House.

We think of Charles de Foucauld and his desert mysticism and charity. We think of St. Damian of Molokai and the lepers he served. We think of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker in Lower Manhattan. We think of St. Teresa of Calcutta and her Pauline Mysticism in service of the poor of the poor.

These are the Gospel radicals of the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy and there are so many, many others – some canonized, some not canonized.

These people help us to understand and frame the life, ministry and death of Deacon Patrick Logsdon. He gave his life entirely and radically to the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy expressed in his over 30 years as program manager of St. Anthony House, a transitional residence for homeless men in Roosevelt.

In his autobiography written on June 13, 1986 expressing his desire to be an ordained permanent deacon for the Diocese of Rockville Centre, he speaks eloquently and humbly of his family, and the path that led him to Catholic social work, a deep experience of biblical and liturgical spirituality and the writings of Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman and Romano Guardini, and a three year experience of Monastic Life at Mount Saviour Monastery in Elmira.

As he was discerning his transitions in life in 1983, he wrote: “I came to a deeper acceptance of myself. I became aware of a pattern to God’s actions in my life. Over the years I was being formed in a certain style of living the gospel. I reached a point where I felt that I didn’t need to be ‘someone’ but just accepted being myself. I learned to treasure this desire I have for a life of intimate prayer with God and a life of service and simplicity. I also wanted to live this life in the context of the Church. These were deep realities that were a real part of being ‘me’. I didn’t analyze them, defend them or try to change them. I accepted them as part of my gift, became grateful for them and wanted to live them as best as I could.”

As I prayed these words this morning, I found some sort of mysterious healing power in them. The deeper he opened up to Christ, the deeper he accepted himself and his unique ecclesial mission. Each one of us here today can benefit from this insight.

I was struck this morning by the opening sentence of Newsday journalist Glenn Gamboa’s review of Bob Dylan’s concert at the Nassau Coliseum last night. He writes: “Bob Dylan will always operate on a frequency that only he fully understands.”

The same could be said of our Catholic Church’s saints and mystics of the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. The same could be said of Deacon Patrick Logsdon.

The Frequency of the Holy Spirit can be quite mysterious in all our lives! But we can always trust it.

Today, as we mourn Deacon Patrick’s tragic death with his family, his brother permanent deacons and the entire Diocese of Rockville Centre, the Saint Vincent

de Paul Society and all those he served, we take great inspiration and consolation in the Light of Christ that shined in, through and roundabout him and the spirit of evangelization he lived through the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.