SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

INIGO MONTOYA KAI:

Hello. My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to be patiently forgiven, even though you are a sinner, since you didn't realize the full impact of what you did. Don't doubt that everything will be OK. I will pray for you.

DIRECTOR LIBBY:

Cut. This isn't going to work. One more time, with less mercy.

CATHOLIC CENTRAL OPENING TITLES

KAI: Hi, I'm Kai.

LIBBY: And I'm Libby.

KAI: Welcome to Catholic Central. Today we're talking about the Spiritual Works of Mercy, which are still important, even though they don't make for great revenge movies.

LIBBY: The Spiritual Works of Mercy are seven ways in which we can help others spiritually.

KAI: Shocking, right?

LIBBY: You might want to tone it down a little.

KAI: Good point. If you're going to do them well, the Spiritual Works of Mercy require humility, patience, and tact.

LIBBY: Or, you know, I don't know, maybe, oh, what's the word, mercy?

KAI: We can get a clue in how to put mercy into action by looking at the Latin word for mercy, *misericordia*, which means to take to heart, cor, someone else's suffering, *miseria*. So what's the first Spiritual Work of Mercy? Well, actually Libby, let me tell you. Instructing the ignorant.

LIBBY: There are several ways not to go about this.

DOOMSDAY PROPHET KAI:

You're ignorant. And you're ignorant. You're all hopelessly ignorant.

KAI: Yeah, that never really works.

LIBBY: Ignorant isn't supposed to be an insult here.

KAI: It means more someone who lacks knowledge, or who is maybe seeking a truth they haven't found yet.

LIBBY: Catholics believe that they are called to share their faith.

KAI: Matthew's Gospel ends with this command from Jesus. "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

LIBBY: But we all have to keep in mind where the person we're talking to, is coming from, and treat them with love and respect.

KAI: And remember that there are areas that we are definitely ignorant in as well.

LIBBY: Which brings us to counseling the doubtful.

KAI: Everyone has doubts or difficult decisions to make from time to time. It's a natural and healthy part of the spiritual life.

LIBBY: The poet Mary Oliver alluded to this when she asked, "How many roads did Saint Augustine follow before he became Saint Augustine?"

KAI: Answer, lots. So when those close to us express doubt, we can be there for them, listen, and give advice.

LIBBY: And remember that sometimes periods of doubt can lead to the greatest spiritual growth.

KAI: So when someone expresses doubt, there's no need to assume you know what's going to happen when they die, or to condemn them yourself.

LIBBY: Speaking of condemnation...

KAI: Next is admonishing the sinner.

LIBBY: Admonish means to advise or caution against, not …

SIN POLICE LIBBY:

Oh, you got a little angry when someone stole your shopping card at Walmart yesterday? You're a sinner. And you told a lie to get out of going to a bridal shower? Sinner. Oh, and you stole money from the collection plate? Hahaha, big sinner.

LIBBY: Here we can take a page from Pope Francis, who in his address to the U.S. Catholic Bishops in 2015 said, "Although harsh and divisive language may momentarily seem to win the day, only the enduring allure of goodness and love remains truly convincing."

KAI: And also remember the many times Jesus warned against hypocrisy.

LIBBY: Everyone struggles with sin in their lives, so it's important to do some introspection on ourselves, before focusing on others.

KAI: Next up, bearing wrongs patiently, and forgiving offenses willingly.

LIBBY: OK, you know what, I am trying.

KAI: Whoa, I wasn't talking to you specifically.

LIBBY: Sorry. This one's just not fair. You have no idea what my arch-nemesis has done in the past week alone.

LIBBY: Great-grandpa's pipe, not again!

KAI: It might help to remember Jesus's words on forgiveness. "But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other one to him as well."

LIBBY: Ooh, easier said than done, buddy.

KAI: Well, yeah, it is. Which is kind of the point. Forgiveness is hard. It takes time and sometimes doesn't seem fair. And that's why Jesus' message on this was revolutionary.

LIBBY: The idea of justice before Jesus was pretty brutal.

KAI: Yeah, eyes gouged out, hands chopped off, that kind of thing.

LIBBY: But bearing wrongs and forgiving offenses are two of the Spiritual Works of Mercy that are good, not only for the person receiving patience and forgiveness, but also the person giving them.

KAI: As is the case with comforting the afflicted.

LIBBY: Afflictions can be emotional, physical, mental or spiritual.

KAI: And some of us, when faced with someone else's affliction, do a pretty bad job of comforting.

CRYING LIBBY:

My dog died.

OLD LADY KAI:

Well, why don't you just adjust your attitude? God has a plan. It could be worse. Offer it up.

LIBBY: A better way to comfort the afflicted is to accompany people through it.

KAI: And to realize that sometimes there's no way you can fix something or take away someone's suffering.

LIBBY: But you can listen, offer words of encouragement and pray.

KAI: Which is an excellent segue to our last work of mercy. Praying for the living and the dead.

LIBBY: Catholics believe that you can still pray for the dead to join God in heaven, after they die.

KAI: Because Catholics don't presume to know where people will end up.

LIBBY: But Catholics also believe that prayer has benefits that go far beyond whatever we're praying for.

KAI: Praying for others helps us to overcome our own selfishness, and brings us closer to God.

LIBBY: And that wraps it up. Seven ways …

KAI: But wait Libby, there's more.

LIBBY: More?

KAI: In addition to these Seven Spiritual Works of Mercy, Pope Francis has proposed an eighth: Gratefully contemplating God's world.

LIBBY: Ah, yes. Looking to God's creation helps us to appreciate God in all things …

KAI: ... and see what God wants to teach us through them.

LIBBY: All right, so there you have it. Eight ways to put love into action.

KAI: For more resources, check out our website, CatholicCentral.com.

LIBBY: And be sure to subscribe to our channel.

KAI: Thanks for watching Catholic Central.

LIBBY: Until next time, make it work.

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