

Stress spiritual works of mercy

There was a time when disciples dedicated themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of the bread and prayer, with the result that the Church grew. Now is a time when bishops in the United States are gathered together wondering why the church in America has shrunk over the last 50 years. Could there possibly be a relationship between the past and present?

I suggest the corporal works of mercy (e.g., social justice initiatives) have overpowered the spiritual works of mercy (e.g., faith formation activities) with Cain-killing-Abel consequences.

Perhaps we should get back to basics where the gifts of the Holy Spirit (i.e., wisdom, knowledge, understanding, counsel, fortitude, piety and fear of the Lord) inspire social action rather than purely natural concerns lacking in awareness of humanity's true dignity and destiny.