

February 24, 2023

Good Morning!

Lenten Dinner - Hosted by this year's Confirmation Class beginning at 5:30 pm.  
Stations of the Cross - 7:00 pm

1. Today's Readings: [Friday after Ash Wednesday | USCCB](#)

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: Of the three pillars of Lent, almsgiving doesn't always get much emphasis. However, in Mt 6:16-18, Jesus speaks of almsgiving first before fasting and prayer. Where do we place it in our lives?

3. Quotes of the Day:

~"Prayer is good when accompanied by fasting, almsgiving, and righteousness. A little with righteousness is better than much with wrongdoing. It is better to give alms than to treasure up gold. For almsgiving delivers from death, and it will purge away every sin. Those who perform deeds of charity and of righteousness will have fullness of life." *Tobit 12:8-9*

~"They are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Prayer knocks at the door, fasting obtains, mercy receives. Prayer, mercy and fasting: these three are one, and they give life to each other." *St. Peter Chrysologus*

***St. Joseph, Pray for Us!***

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**A poor box is seen at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. Almsgiving does not expect repayment; it is an act of mercy and of justice.**  
(CNS photo by Tyler Orsburn)

## **Why give alms?**

Lent is a time of sacrifice. We strive to unite ourselves with the suffering of Jesus, walking with him in the desert, agonizing with him in the garden, dying with him on the cross.

There are three traditional “pillars” of Lent that help us follow in Christ’s footsteps: prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Of the three, almsgiving probably gets the least attention, but it is one way that we can make sacrifice during Lent while supporting the needy, the work of the church or another worthy cause.



Alms can be money, or sometimes food, that is given to the poor.

To live out almsgiving in the spirit of Lenten sacrifice and following the clear teaching of Jesus, we should give not only from our surplus, from what we can spare; rather, we should give even the coat off our back.

Jesus praised the poor widow who gave of her meager mean; she did not hang onto the money, but she gave what little she had (Mk 12:41-44). St. John Chrysostom wrote that our almsgiving “shines with a brighter luster” when given from our poverty.

In the Acts of the Apostles, we are told, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (20:35). In the Book of Tobit, we are reminded, “Prayer with fasting is good. Almsgiving with righteousness is better than wealth with wickedness. It is better to give alms than to store up gold, for almsgiving saves from death, and purges all sin. Those who give alms will enjoy a full life” (12:8-9).

Giving alms, sharing what we have with those in need, is not just a good idea, something with spiritual benefits — it is our vocation, our moral obligation.

St. John Chrysostom wrote, “Not to share our own riches with the poor is a robbery of the poor, and a depriving them of their livelihood.” He also wrote, “It is for this that God has permitted you to possess much ... that you should distribute it to the needy.”

Almsgiving does not expect repayment; it is an act of mercy and of justice, in the purest sense of “caritas.”

Jesus explained this to his disciples when he said, “When you hold a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your wealthy neighbors, in case they may invite you back and you have repayment. Rather, when you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you” (Lk 14:12-13).

Jesus later taught that we are called to give to the needy, to be merciful, and that whatever we do or do not do to even the least among us, we do to him (Mt 25:31-46).

St. Basil the Great applied this teaching when he wrote, “The bread you do not use is the bread of the hungry. The garment hanging in your wardrobe is the garment of the person who is naked. The shoes you do not wear are the shoes of the one who is barefoot. The money you keep locked away is the money of the poor. The acts of charity you do not perform are the injustices you commit.”

Everything we have is from God. Everything we are is from God. In that sense, everything we have and are is a gift of God to the needy, for we are nothing without his grace. Almsgiving is simply paying it forward, passing along the gifts we have been given to those who are in need.

Do not let this be relegated only to Lent. Inspired by these passages from Scripture, the words of the saints and the calling from Our Lord, almsgiving should be done the whole year. Let Lent be the springboard and give of yourself always.

*Source: catholiccourier.com*