

ALMSGIVING



The observance of Lent is marked by three particular spiritual practices: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Why is the giving of alms recommended to us in this season?

Caring for the poor and vulnerable is one of the hallmarks of the Christian life. Many of the Old Testament prophets warn the leaders of the Israelites that their worship is useless if they do not care for the poor and marginalized. Jesus reminds us that “Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25:40) while many of the early Church Fathers exhorted the faithful of

their duty to carry out the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.

As Christians we believe that the gifts we have been given are not just for our own benefit. Rather, we are called

“GIVING ALMS TO THE POOR IS A WITNESS TO FRATERNAL CHARITY: IT IS ALSO A WORK OF JUSTICE PLEASING TO GOD.”

:: *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2462

to steward them on behalf of God and use them for his purposes (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 2402-2406). These gifts, which include our time, talent, and treasures, are meant to help us love and worship God and

reach out to our neighbors to extend God’s love to them.

Practicing almsgiving and good stewardship of God’s gifts also reminds us that the things of this world are temporary, while we strive for the eternal. In their pastoral letter on stewardship the U.S. bishops tells us that “Christians live... in the confidence that comes from faith: for they know that the human goods they cherish and cultivate will be perfected—and they themselves will be fulfilled—in that Kingdom, already present, which Christ will bring to perfection and one



Watch the video:

youtu.be/PRZVUXD00b4



day hand over to the Father.” (*Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*)

As we continue our Lenten journey this year, look for opportunities to share your gifts with others, especially the poor and vulnerable in your community, and pray that God will continue to give you gifts to share with others for your benefit and for the salvation of the world.

“DO NOT TURN YOUR FACE AWAY FROM ANY OF THE POOR, SO THAT GOD’S FACE WILL NOT BE TURNED AWAY FROM YOU.. ALMSGIVING IS A WORTHY OFFERING IN THE SIGHT OF THE MOST HIGH FOR ALL WHO PRACTICE IT.”

:: Tobit 4:7, 11

Family Discussion Questions

1. How has the Lord blessed you and your family? What gifts are you most grateful for?
2. What gifts are you called to share with others, especially as we make our 40 day journey through Lent?
3. How can your family’s observance of Lent through the practice of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, draw you closer to Christ and prepare to celebrate his Resurrection at Easter?

Family Challenge

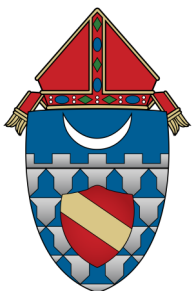
Set up an alms jar somewhere in your home. Throughout Lent, when you place your offering in the jar, say a small prayer for the poor, the hungry, the dying, and others in need.

Additional Videos

- Bishop Doherty on the Preferential Option for the Poor: youtu.be/SDBo0L8TYhQ
- The Good Samaritan: Almsgiving: youtu.be/xMQHOQqAAak
- Almsgiving and Atonement for Sin: youtu.be/x31PlmIIA_4

Other Resources

- [*Mercy in the City: How to Feed the Hungry, Give Drink to the Thirsty, Visit the Imprisoned, and Keep Your Day Job*](#) by Kerry Weber (Loyola Press, 2014)
- [*Sacraments and Social Mission: Living the Gospel, Being Disciples*](#) (USCCB, 2013)



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