

Catechism Excerpt 7: On Giving Alms

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Giving alms is one of the main corporal works of mercy

“For alms deliver from all sin, and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness. Alms shall be a great confidence before the most high God, to all them that give it.”

(Tobias 4:11-12)

The most often corporal work of mercy mentioned in the Bible is giving alms. There are many benefits in giving alms; such as the remission of venial sins, expiation of the punishment due to sins, appeasement of God’s wrath, gaining grace for yourself and others, helping the souls in purgatory, gaining protection from falling into sin and physical calamities, obtaining prosperity and other favors from God, and showing others you love them:

“Prayer is good with fasting and alms more than to lay up treasures of gold. For alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sins and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting.” (Tob. 12:8-9)

“Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to thee and redeem thou thy sins with alms and thy iniquities with works of mercy to the poor. Perhaps he will forgive thy offences.” (Dan. 4:24)

“Deal thy bread to the hungry and bring the needy and the harbourless into thy house. When thou shalt see one naked, cover him and despise not thy own flesh. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall speedily arise, and thy justice shall go before thy face, and the glory of the Lord shall gather thee up.” (Isa. 58:7-8)

Alms are generally freewill gifts. Hence in every case and every circumstance, Catholics are not obliged to give alms. However, Catholics are obliged to give alms under certain circumstances under pain of sin. And they are also obliged *not* to give alms under certain circumstances.

When you are obliged to give alms

Only if you have income above your living expenses

You must have extra income above your living expenses for your state of life:

“Give of thy bread to the hungry, and of thy garments to them that are naked; and according to thine abundance give alms.” (Tob. 4:16)

“But yet that which remaineth, give alms.” (Lk. 11:41)

Before giving alms, you must give tithes to Catholic Church, pay your state and other taxes, and pay your debts. And you must sufficiently provide for yourself; your family; any workers, servants, or slaves you may have; and the upkeep of your home and other property. What’s over and above can be used for alms. If you have no extra income, then you are not obliged to give alms under any circumstances.

To certain needy men who are sick

If it is within your means, you must give alms for the medical care to certain needy men who sick. The conditions are as follows:

- The man must not be under a just death sentence;

- There must be a cure for the man;
- The man must have access to the cure but does not have enough money to pay for it;
- The man must not have sufficient means to pay for the cure;
- You must have personal access to the man, one on one. I say direct personal access to him because it is obvious that you cannot help every person in the world who is sick. If everybody helped those they have access to where they live, then everybody would have help.

You may not be able to give him all the money he needs to be cured but a little will help if many give—today this is known as crowd funding. Jesus commends the alms and other help the good Samaritan gave to a severely wounded man while condemning the Jews who would not help the wounded man:

“But he [a Jewish lawyer] willing to justify himself, said to Jesus: And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering, said: A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers who also stripped him, and having wounded him went away, leaving him half dead. And it chanced that a certain priest went down the same way, and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan being on his journey, came near him; and seeing him was moved with compassion. And going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine and setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two pence and gave to the host, and said: Take care of him; and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I, at my return, will repay thee. Which of these three, in thy opinion, was neighbour to him that fell among the robbers? But he said: He that shewed mercy to him. And Jesus said to him: Go, and do thou in like manner.” (Lk. 10:29-37)

To certain needy men who are living in inhumane conditions

If it is within your means, you must give alms to certain needy men who by no fault of their own are living in inhumane conditions. Inhumane conditions means living in an unhealthy or unsafe environment. The conditions are as follows:

- The man’s inhumane condition must be by no fault of his own. If it is by his own fault (meaning he has the means to correct it but will not), then you must leave him in his own mess. If it were a Catholic State, such a man would be put in an institution;
- There must be a way to alleviate or eliminate the inhumane condition;
- The man must not have sufficient money to pay for the means to alleviate or eliminate his inhumane condition;
- You must have personal access to the man, one on one. I say direct personal access to him because it is obvious that you cannot help every person in the world who is living in inhumane conditions. If everybody helped those they have access to where they live, then everybody would have help

One way to be unhealthy is by not having sufficient food. Jesus condemned the greedy Rich man who would not help the poor, hungry, and sick Lazarus. The Rich man ended up in hell for

not giving alms when he was obliged to and Lazarus ended up in Abraham's Bosom and is now in heaven:

“There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and feasted sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, who lay at his gate, full of sores, Desiring to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and no one did give him; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died, and he was buried in Gehenna.” (Lk. 16:19-22)

Hence it is a mortal sin to not give alms and other helps when you are obliged to. Jesus said,

“Then shall the king say to them that shall be on his right hand: Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you covered me; sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me. Then shall the just answer him, saying: Lord, when did we see thee hungry, and fed thee; thirsty, and gave thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked, and covered thee? Or when did we see thee sick or in prison, and came to thee? And the king answering, shall say to them: Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me. Then he shall say to them also that shall be on his left hand: Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink; I was a stranger, and you took me not in; naked, and you covered me not; sick and in prison, and you did not visit me. Then they also shall answer him, saying: Lord, when did we see thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to thee? Then he shall answer them, saying: Amen I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to me. And these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just, into life everlasting.” (Mt. 25:34-46)

When you must not give alms

Men who are lazy

You must not give alms to men who are lazy; that is, men who can work but will not. St. Paul says do not even let them eat:

“For also when we were with you, this we declared to you: that, if any man will not work, neither let him eat.” (2 Thess. 3:10)

However beware of those who do not give to those in need who are not lazy but incapable of working to earn a living either because of illness, old age, disability, lack of available jobs, or because they are single women or children. Some of them call these people useless feeders. These cheap, stingy, unloving so-called Catholics are certainly like the damned-to-hell Rich Man who would not give the poor and sick Lazarus any food (Lk. 16:19-22).

“I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring you ought to support the weak, and to remember the word of the Lord Jesus, how he said: It is a more blessed thing to give, rather than to receive.” (Acts 20:35)

Men who will use the alms for a sinful purpose

You must not give alms to men who will use it for a sinful purpose, such as to get drunk, do illegal drugs, or finance a criminal or otherwise sinful act:

“Give of thy bread to the hungry, and of thy garments to them that are naked; and according to thine abundance give alms. And let not thine eye be envious, when thou givest alms. Pour out thy bread on the burial of the just but give nothing to the wicked. Ask counsel of all that are wise and despise not any counsel that is profitable.” (Tob. 4:16)

“Give to the good, and receive not a sinner. Do good to the humble and give not to the ungodly; hold back thy bread, and give it not to him, lest thereby he overmaster thee. For thou shalt receive twice as much evil for all the good thou shalt have done to him.” (Eccus. 12:5-7)

All non-Catholics are ungodly and wicked in one way or another. But Catholics are to give alms to non-Catholics not only to Catholics. Hence, in context, the words “wicked” and “ungodly,” as used in these verses, means men whose mortal sins are obstinate and against the moral laws of the natural law. And it means to not give so much to non-Catholics who are eligible to receive alms so that they gain power and authority over Catholics. In a Catholic State, non-Catholics must be kept from gaining control over the State.

Men who have enough but pretend they do not

You must not give alms to con artists; that is, men who make a living at begging when they could work for a living. They pretend that they do not have enough while they have more than enough. And some are even rich. They dress in poor clothes, put dirt on their faces, and pretend they are in need. When they go home, they wash off the dirt and put on good clothes and live in nice homes and eat good food.

You must give to a Catholic before a non-Catholic who are under similiar conditions

Under similar circumstances of need, you must first give alms to Catholics before non-Catholics:

“Therefore, whilst we have time, let us work good to all men but especially to those who are of the household of the faith.” (Gal. 6:10)

Catholic Commentary on Gal. 6:10: “**The household of the faith:** those who profess the same true faith. We are more bound to assist Catholics than Jews and heretics.”

Those who have more must give more

God condemns class warfare between the rich and the poor. Although God condemns the love of money and wants all to be poor in spirit and willing to lose all things for the faith, he does not want all rich men to become poor nor all poor men to become rich.¹ But God does demand that there be a balance between those who have more and those who have less so that all will at least have what they need to survive and live comfortably. St. Paul speaks of this. He says that while

¹ See in *RJMI Topic Index*: Rich and Poor.

those who have more provide physical things for the poor, the poor provide spiritual things for those who have more physical things by praying and sacrificing for them. And the very gift of alms from those who have more grants them many graces:

“Perform out of that which you have. For if the will be forward, it is accepted according to that which a man hath, not according to that which he hath not. For I mean not that others should be eased and you burdened but by an equality. In this present time let your abundance [of physical things] supply their want, that their abundance [of spiritual things] also may supply your want, that there may be an equality, As it is written: He that had much, had nothing over; and he that had little, had no want.” (2 Cor. 8:11-15)

Catholic Commentary on 2 Cor. 8:12-13: “**Equality:** “He tells them that it is the will that chiefly makes their charity acceptable to God, who sees the heart. And that the design is not to make others live at their ease, in a richer condition than those who give, but to make a kind of equality, their brethren in Judea being now in great poverty and want. God regards two things in our alms: first, the zeal and good-will with which we give our alms; secondly, the greatness of our charities, that is, if they be proportionate to our means. If you have little, give a little, but with good-will; if you have much, give also much, but with equal benevolence and zeal. God measures the extent of our charity by the greatness of our zeal, not requiring of us what we have not, but what we have to spare, relieving others, without overcharging ourselves.”

Hence in an ideal Catholic State no one is in dire need. All have more than enough food, shelter, and other necessities of life:

“And there shall be no poor nor beggar among you that the Lord thy God may bless thee in the land which he will give thee in possession.” (Deut. 15:4)

“If one of thy brethren that dwelleth within the gates of thy city in the land which the Lord thy God will give thee come to poverty, thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor close thy hand, but shalt open it to the poor man. Thou shalt lend him that which thou perceivest he hath need of. Beware lest perhaps a wicked thought steal in upon thee, and thou say in thy heart: The seventh year of remission draweth nigh; and thou turn away thy eyes from thy poor brother, denying to lend him that which he asketh: lest he cry against thee to the Lord, and it become a sin unto thee. But thou shalt give to him, neither shalt thou do any thing craftily in relieving his necessities that the Lord thy God may bless thee at all times, and in all things to which thou shalt put thy hand. There will not be wanting poor in the land of thy habitation; therefore I command thee to open thy hand to thy needy and poor brother that liveth in the land.” (Deut. 15:7-11)

Alms given to organizations and institutions must be approved by the Catholic Church

Because many so-called charitable organizations, institutions, and Go Fund Me pages steal most of the donations and use very little for their supposed cause or use some of the money for sinful purposes, you must only give donations (alms) to organizations that are approved of by the Catholic Church. And you must not give donations to those ones the Catholic Church disapproves of.

If you do not have access to a competent Catholic authority, then you must investigate the organization, institution, or Go Fund Me page yourself before giving them donations. You must be absolutely sure it is honest and thus uses most of the donations for the intended good cause. And you must make sure it does not use the money for a sinful purpose; such as by giving poor

people contraceptives or abortions or trying to convert them into a non-Catholic Church or sect while also giving them food and shelter.

You must not use alms to cover your sins against the faith or morals

You must not use alms to cover your sins against the faith or morals. All the alms in the world will not save you if you die guilty of a mortal against the faith or morals. Beware, then, of putting corporal works of mercy (such as giving alms) above the spiritual works of mercy (such as professing the Catholic faith and admonishing sinners in order to convert unbelievers and sinful Catholics). All the food and shelter in the world cannot give an unbeliever or Catholics in mortal sin everlasting life.

So-called Catholics who put corporal works of mercy above or to the exclusion the spiritual works of mercy have denied the faith and thus are heretics. They are nominal Catholics. They use their so-called works of charity appear honorable and holy in the eyes of others while covering their sins against the faith.

“Therefore, when thou dost an almsdeed, sound not a trumpet before thee as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets that they may be honoured by men. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But when thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth. That thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee.” (Mt. 6:2-4)

Catholic Commentary on Mt. 6:1: “**Sound not a trumpet:** St. Gregory says, that the man who by his virtuous actions would gain the applause of men quits at an easy rate a treasure of immense value; for with what he might purchase the kingdom of heaven, he only seeks to acquire the transitory applause of mortals. This precept of Christ beautifully evinces the solicitude and unspeakable goodness of God, lest we should have the labour of performing good works, and on account of evil motives be deprived of our reward. We must avoid all ostentation in the performance of our good works. Many respectable authors are of opinion that it was customary with the Pharisees and other hypocrites to assemble the poor they designed to relieve by sound of trumpet. Let us avoid vain glory, the agreeable plunderer of our good works, the pleasant enemy of our souls, which presents its poison to us under the appearance of honey.”

The following Bible verse condemns the false charity of nominal Catholics, such as the apostate Mother Theresa,² who use corporal works of mercy to appear holy while denying the Catholic faith and other spiritual works of mercy:

“And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” (1 Cor. 13:3)

Hence charity is not simply helping the poor or dying for Christ. True charity is the love of God which is proved by obedience to *all* of his commandments:

“This is charity, that we walk according to his commandments.” (2 Jn. 1:6)

“For this is the charity of God, that we keep his commandments.” (1 Jn. 5:3)

² The apostate Mother Theresa cared nothing for souls but all for the body. Not only did she not try to convert and thus save non-Catholics, she encouraged them to stay in their false religion and even respected their false gods and false religions. Instead of giving them food and saying that “This food will temporality help your body but it cannot help your soul. If you die with a full stomach but as a pagan you will go to hell and be tormented forever,” she said, “I’ve always said we should help a Hindu become a better Hindu, a Muslim become a better Muslim, a Catholic become a better Catholic.” (*Everything Starts From Prayer, Mother Teresa’s Meditations on Spiritual Life for People of all Faiths*, Anthony Stern).

You must not give or accept alms from ill-gotten goods

“It is not lawful for us either to eat or to touch anything that cometh by theft.”
(Tobias 2:21)

You must not cover your sins and try to appear pious and holy by giving alms from money you earned in a sinful way, such as by stealing, selling illegal drugs, or by prostitution, etc. And you must not receive alms or donations and the Catholic Church must not receive tithes if they know they were earned in a sinful way.

For example, many notorious drug dealers who murder thousands of people give some of the blood money they earn to the Church and other good causes in order to cover their sins and appear holy and pious. Yet, these alms are poison and instead of bringing a blessing upon the giver, it curses him. And it curses those who receive these dirty alms if they know that the alms were earned in a sinful way. Hence you must not receive alms or donations and the Church must not receive tithes of money or other goods that they know were obtained in a sinful way.

You must not use the faith and outward piety to cover your cheapness or apathy in giving alms

You must beware of the opposite mortal sin of using your faith and outward piety to cover your cheapness or apathy in not giving alms and other help to those in need. While spiritual works of mercy must come first, the corporal works of mercy are also necessary for salvation:

“What shall it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but hath not works? Shall faith be able to save him? And if a brother or sister be naked and want daily food, and one of you say to them: Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; yet give them not those things that are necessary for the body, what shall it profit?” (Jam. 2:14-16)

“He that hath the substance of this world and shall see his brother in need and shall shut up his bowels from him, how doth the charity of God abide in him?” (1 Jn. 3:17)

For the glory of God; in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Michael, St. Joseph, Ss. Joachim and Anne, St. John the Baptist, the other angels and saints; and for the salvation of men

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