

On Riches, Possessions, Poverty, Begging, and Alms



R. J. M. I.

By

The Precious Blood of Jesus Christ;
The Grace of the God of the Holy Catholic Church;
The Mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
Our Lady of Good Counsel and Crusher of Heretics;
The Protection of Saint Joseph,
Patriarch of the Holy Family and Patron of the Holy Catholic Church;
The Guidance of the Good Saint Anne,
Mother of Mary and Grandmother of God;
The Intercession of the Archangels Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael;
The Intercession of All the Other Angels and Saints;
and the Cooperation of

Richard Joseph Michael Ibranyi

To Jesus through Mary

*Júdica me, Deus, et discérne causam meam de gente non sancta:
ab hómine iníquo, et dolóso érue me*

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

“The rich and poor have met one another;
the Lord is the maker of them both.”
(Proverbs 22:1-2)

“Rich or poor, if his heart is good
his countenance shall be cheerful at all times.”
(Ecclesiasticus 26:4)

“Thou shalt not do that which is unjust nor judge unjustly. Respect
not the person of the poor nor honor the countenance of the mighty.
But judge thy neighbor according to justice.”
(Leviticus 19:15)

*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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Dogmas on the Rich and Poor

Evil rich men

“Jesus saith to him: If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come follow me. And when the young man had heard this word, he went away sad, for he had great possessions.” (Mt. 19:21-22)

We know Jesus did not tell all of his followers to give up all their possessions because his followers owned lands, homes, and other possessions.¹ So it would be unjust for Jesus to tell all rich men to give up all their possessions. One proof is Zacheus, who was rich. Jesus praised him for giving half of his possessions to the poor and thus did not tell him to sell all his possessions:

“And behold, there was a man named Zacheus, who was the chief of the publicans, and he was rich... But Zacheus standing, said to the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wronged any man of anything, I restore him fourfold. Jesus said to him: This day is salvation come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham.” (Lk. 19:2, 8-9)

St. Ambrose, *Exposition of the Gospel of St. Luke*, Book 8, c. 389: “85. ...For while wealth is a stumbling block to the evil-minded, in the good it is an aid to virtue. Zacheus, who was called by Christ, was surely a rich man. But by giving half of his wealth to the poor and restoring four-fold what he had acquired unjustly, he received a reward that surpassed the benefits he conferred.”²

The rich man, then, that Jesus was speaking to, as recorded in Mt. 19:21-22, was greedy and loved his riches more than he loved God and thus idolized them. To remedy his lust for riches, Jesus told him to sell his riches and follow him. Rich men, then, that are greedy and lust after and covet riches are evil:

“There is not a more wicked thing than a covetous man.” (Eccus. 10:9)

“For the love of money is the root of all these evils, which some coveting have erred from the faith and have entangled themselves in many sorrows.” (1 Tim. 6:10)

“[Evil rich men] hoard up silver and gold, wherein men trust, and there is no end of their getting.” (Bar. 3:18)

“A covetous man shall not be satisfied with money; and he that loveth riches shall reap no fruit from them... There is also another grievous evil, which I have seen under the sun, riches kept to the hurt of the owner.” (Ectes. 5:9-12)

“He that loveth gold shall not be justified; and he that followeth after corruption shall be filled with it. Many have been brought to fall for gold, and the beauty thereof hath been their ruin. Gold is a stumblingblock to them that sacrifice to it; woe to them that eagerly follow after it, and every fool shall perish by it.” (Eccus. 31:5-7)

“O ye rich men, weep and howl in your miseries, which shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be for a testimony against you and shall eat your flesh like fire. You have stored up to yourselves wrath against the last days. Behold the hire of the labourers, who have reaped down your fields, which by fraud has been kept back by you, crieth: and the cry of them hath entered into the ears of

¹ See in this book “The Holy Family, apostles, and disciples owned possessions,” p. 15.

² PL, v. 15, col. 1791.

the Lord of Sabaoth. You have feasted upon earth; and in riotousness you have nourished your hearts in the day of slaughter.” (Jam. 5:1-5)

The Apostolic Constitutions does not condemn all rich men but only those who do not use the excess of their riches for the poor and other good causes. And it condemns the rich man who will not even spend his riches on himself but simply hoards it:

Apostolic Constitutions, 1st to 4th centuries: “IV. For he that has money and does not bestow it upon others nor use it himself is like the serpent, which they say sleeps over the treasures; and of him is that scripture true which says, ‘He has gathered riches of which he shall not taste,’ and they will be of no use to him when he perishes justly. For it says, ‘Riches will not profit in the day of wrath.’ For such a one has not believed in God but in his own gold, esteeming that his god and trusting therein. Such a one is a dissembler of the truth, an acceptor of persons, unfaithful, cheating, fearful, unmanly, light, of no value, a complainer, ever in pain, his own enemy, and nobody’s friend. Such a one’s money shall perish, and a man that is a stranger shall consume it, either by theft while he is alive, or by inheritance when he is dead.”³

Good rich men

Whereas, the rich man who uses his riches as if they were not his own and thus shares his riches with the needy and for other good causes is as if he were poor even though he has great riches.

“One...is as it were poor, when he hath great riches.” (Prv. 13:7)

The good rich man does not lust after or covet riches:

“Blessed is the rich man that is found without blemish and that hath not gone after gold nor put his trust in money nor in treasures. Who is he, and we will praise him? For he hath done wonderful things in his life. Who hath been tried thereby and made perfect, he shall have glory everlasting. He that could have transgressed and hath not transgressed, and could do evil things and hath not done them. Therefore are his goods established in the Lord, and all the Church of the saints shall declare his alms.” (Eccus. 31:8-11)

Jesus would not tell the good rich man to sell his riches because this rich man uses his riches well and already follows Jesus, provided he keeps the faith and is not guilty of any mortal sins.

“Riches are good to him that hath no sin in his conscience.” (Eccus. 13:30)

The good rich man does not idolize riches and thus does not put his riches above God. He trusts in God above all and not in his riches.

“Charge the rich of this world not to be highminded nor to trust in the uncertainty of riches but in the living God, who giveth us abundantly all things to enjoy.” (1 Tim. 6:17)

Whereas, an evil rich man trusts in his riches more than God. Jesus says,

“How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God.” (Mk. 10:24)

A good and faithful rich man is willing to lose all he has (his riches, his possessions, his family, and even his very life itself) if he must, in order to save his soul. That is what Jesus means when he says,

³ b. 4, sec. 1.

“Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth cannot be my disciple.” (Lk. 14:33)

This does not mean that every believer must sell all of his possessions, for that would be heretical communism, which forbids men to own or possess anything. It means that believers must spiritually renounce their possessions and choose God and the faith in preference to their possessions. They must not put them over God and the faith, and hence they must be willing to sell or lose their possessions if they must in order to remain faithful and save their souls.⁴

Jesus, son of Sirach, teaches the following:

“When thou hast enough, remember the time of hunger; and when thou art rich, think upon poverty and need.” (Eccus. 18:25)

“He that is glorified in wealth, let him fear poverty.” (Eccus. 10:34)

“In all thy works remember thy last end [heaven or gehenna] and thou shalt never sin.” (Eccus. 7:40)

Here are some examples of holy rich men who used their riches rightly and justly and thus were blessed by God, which is just more proof that not all rich men are evil and that God does not command all rich men to sell or give away all their possessions—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph (son of Jacob), Job, Judith, King David, and Zacheus:

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: “And Abram went up out of Egypt, he and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And he was very rich in possession of gold and silver.” (Gen. 13:1-2) And Isaac and Jacob inherited and increased Abraham’s wealth.

Joseph, son of Jacob: Joseph was second in charge of all Egypt. “And again Pharaoh said to Joseph: Behold, I have appointed thee over the whole land of Egypt.” (Gen. 41:41)

Judith: “And she [St. Judith] was exceedingly beautiful, and her husband left her great riches, and very many servants, and large possessions of herds of oxen, and flocks of sheep.” (Judi. 8:7)

Job: “There was a man in the land of Hus, whose name was Job, and that man was simple and upright, and fearing God, and avoiding evil. And there were born to him seven sons and three daughters. And his possession was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a family exceeding great: and this man was great among all the people of the east.” (Job 1:1-3)... If I have denied to the poor what they desired, and have made the eyes of the widow wait; if I have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; ...if I have despised him that was perishing for want of clothing and the poor man that had no covering; if his sides have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; if I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, even when I saw myself superior in the gate, let my shoulder fall from its joint, and let my arm with its bones be broken. For I have always feared God as waves swelling over me, and his weight I was not able to bear. If I have thought gold my strength, and have said to fine gold: My confidence; if I have rejoiced over my great riches, and because my hand had gotten much, ...which is a very great iniquity and a denial against the most high God.” (Job 31:16-28)

King David: “So David, the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel... And he died in a good age, full of days, and riches, and glory.” (1 Par. 29:26, 28)

Zacheus: (See in this book “One proof is Zacheus,” p. [21](#).)

⁴ For a more in-depth explanation, see in this “The context of Jesus telling his followers to renounce all possessions (Lk. 14:33),” p. [20](#). And see “The Dogma that God Ordains Catholics to Own Possessions,” p. [14](#).

Evil poor men

The poor man who covets and lusts after riches has the same evil spirit as the evil rich man.

“Through poverty many have sinned, and he that seeketh to be enriched turneth away his eye.” (Eccus. 27:1)

For want of riches the greedy poor man cannot commit the sins of the rich man but would if he had the power (the riches):

“And if he be hindered from sinning for want of power, if he shall find opportunity to do evil, he will do it.” (Eccus. 19:25)

St. Augustine, *Sermons on the New Testament*, Sermon 35, Commentary on Matthew 19:23-26: “6. ...Avarice is the wishing to be greedy and rich, even if not rich already. This is avarice.”

Therefore, poor men are not good simply because they are poor. Even though we must not judge a person based upon the fact that he is poor (and thus we must “Do no violence to the poor because he is poor” (Prv. 22:22), we must do violence to the poor when he sins. Anyone who knows poor people knows that they commit many mortal sins:

“Poverty is very wicked in the mouth of the ungodly.” (Eccus. 13:30)

Even though poor men are more apt to be humble than rich men because of their lowly state, not all poor men are humble:

“My soul hateth...a poor man that is proud.” (Eccus. 25:3)

We know that most poor men are evil because God says many times that very few men are saved, whether rich or poor:

“How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it!” (Mt. 7:14)

If all or most poor men were saved, then many men and not few would be saved because there are very many more poor men than rich men. In the final days, most of the rich as well as the poor will take the mark of the beast and thus serve the Antichrist:

“And he shall make all, both little and great, rich and poor, freemen and bondmen, to have a character in their right hand or on their foreheads.” (Apoc. 13:16)

Therefore, when Jesus says blessed are the poor (Lk. 6:20) and the poor in spirit (Mt. 5:3), he means good Catholics who are humble and not greedy, whether rich or poor. And when Jesus says blessed are those who hunger (Lk. 6:21) and those who hunger for justice (Mt. 5:6), he means good Catholics who are poor and those who yearn for true justice, whether rich or poor. We know Jesus is referring only to good Catholics in these verses because he was addressing the faithful when he gave this sermon, and, most of all, because Jesus would never say that unbelievers or bad Catholics are blessed, no matter how many good things they believe in or do. Jesus said,

“He that believeth not shall be condemned.” (Mk. 16:16)

“Not everyone that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. But he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Many will say to me in that day: Lord, Lord, have not we prophesied in thy name, and cast out devils in thy name, and done many miracles in thy name? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity.” (Mt. 7:21-23)

Harder for rich man to be saved, in context

“Then Jesus said to his disciples: Amen, I say to you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you: It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. And when they had heard this, the disciples wondered very much, saying: Who then can be saved? And Jesus beholding, said to them: With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” (Mt. 19:23-26)

Jesus, then, warns rich men more than poor men because riches are a great temptation since they can buy and cover up many sinful things and the lust for riches causes men to commit other mortal sins to get and keep their riches, such as stealing, fraud, murder, blackmail, etc:

“For they that will become rich fall into temptation and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all these evils; which some coveting have erred from the faith and have entangled themselves in many sorrows.” (1 Tim. 6:9-10)

Catholic Commentary on Mt. 19:24: **Camel:** “A rich man who is puffed up and swelling with his riches, on whose back great burdens of wealth are pressing, is compared to a *camel*; and *the strait gate*, by which we must enter into life, to the *eye of a needle*, that you may understand that [those to whom the passage is referring are] those who abound in riches, and are swelling with pride and disdain in too great a degree to allow themselves to be reduced within those narrow bounds in which God confines his own people.”

Jesus, then, is referring to greedy rich men, as most of them will not repent and be saved. Non-greedy rich men are as if they were not rich because they use their riches to help the needy and for other good causes. “One...is as if were poor, when he hath great riches.” (Prv. 13:7) But even greedy rich men can repent and be saved, as all things are possible with God.

Catholic Commentary on Mt. 19:26: **“Impossible:** Again, you may take *impossible* here in a strict sense. For that a rich man should be saved is impossible with men, but it is possible with God, as Christ says in verse 26. That is to say, it is impossible by natural strength, but by the power of the grace given by God it is possible. Just as that a camel should pass through the eye of a needle is possible by the power of God... to God all things are possible, because God is the author and the fountain both of nature and grace and glory, and he so provides that by grace we should easily and gravely overcome all the difficulties and hindrances of nature; and, which pertains to the subject now in hand, he brings it about that rich men are not corrupted by their riches, but will use them well.”

Hence some greedy rich men will repent and be saved. In the end, not only most rich men but also most poor men will be damned and thus not be saved.

Here is what St. Peter says about just men, the elect, who will end up being saved:

“And if the just man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” (1 Pt. 4:18)

So, we see that it is hard even for just men to be saved, but not impossible because all things are possible with God and thus even things that are humanly impossible.

Let no one idolize poor men or condemn all rich men

Let no one, then, take out of context the Word of God in order to idolize the poor or condemn all rich men and thus promote class warfare, the rich against the poor or the poor against the rich.

“The rich and poor have met one another; the Lord is the maker of them both.” (Prv. 22:1-2)

“Rich or poor, if his heart is good his countenance shall be cheerful at all times.” (Eccus. 26:4)

“Thou shalt not do that which is unjust, nor judge unjustly. Respect not the person of the poor nor honor the countenance of the mighty. But judge thy neighbor according to justice.” (Lev. 19:15)

I end this chapter with a commentary of St. Augustine:

St. Augustine, *Sermons on the New Testament*, Sermon 35, Commentary on Matthew 19:23-26:

“2. ...Whosoever of you boast of your poverty, beware of pride, lest the humble rich surpass you; beware of impiety, lest the pious rich surpass you; beware of drunkenness, lest the sober rich surpass you. Do not glory of your poverty, if they must not glory of their riches.

“3. ...Let the rich then of this world give ear to the Apostle, ‘Charge,’ he says, ‘the rich of this world, that they be not proud in their conceits.’ The first worm of riches is pride. A consuming moth, which gnaws the whole and reduces it even to dust. Charge them, therefore, not to be proud in their conceits, nor to trust in the uncertainty of riches (they are the Apostle’s words), but in the living God. A thief may take away your gold. Who can take away your God? What has the rich man, if he has not God? What has the poor man not, if he have God? Therefore he says, Nor to trust in riches, but in the living God, who gives us all things richly to enjoy; with which all things he gives also himself.

“4. If then they ought not to trust in riches, not to confide in them, but in the living God, what are they to do with their riches? Hear what: Let them be rich in good works... Let them easily distribute, let them communicate. You have, another has not; communicate that God may communicate to you. Communicate here, and you shall communicate there. Communicate your bread here, and you shall receive bread there. What bread here? That which you gather with sweat and toil, according to the curse upon the first man. What Bread there? Even him who said, I am the Living Bread which came down from heaven... Let them be rich in good works, let them easily distribute, let them communicate.

“5. Must they then lose all they have? He said, Let them communicate, not let them give the whole. Let them keep for themselves as much as is sufficient for them, let them keep more than is sufficient. Let us give a certain portion of it. What portion? A tenth? ...The Scribes and Pharisees gave the tenth. How is it with you? Ask yourselves. Consider what you do, and with what means you do it; how much you give, how much you leave for yourselves; what you spend on mercy, what you reserve for luxury. So then, let them distribute easily, let them communicate, let them lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may hold on to everlasting life.

“6. I have admonished the rich; now hear, you poor. You rich, lay out your money; ye poor, refrain from plundering. You rich, distribute your means; ye poor, bridle your desires. Hear, you poor, this same Apostle; ‘Godliness with sufficiency is a great getting.’ Getting is the acquiring of gain. The world is yours in common with the rich; you have not a house in common with the rich, but you have the heaven in common, the light in common. Seek only for a sufficiency, seek for what is enough, and do not wish for more. All the rest is a weight, rather than a help; a burden, rather than an honour. Godliness with sufficiency is great gain. First is Godliness. Godliness is the worship of God. Godliness with sufficiency. For we brought nothing into this world. Did you bring anything hither? Nay, not even did ye rich

bring anything. You found all here, you were born naked as the poor. In both alike is the same bodily infirmity; the same infant crying, the witness of our misery. For we brought nothing into this world (he is speaking to the poor), neither can we carry anything out. And having food and covering, let us be therewith content.

“For they who wish to be rich, who wish to be, not who are. For they who are so, well and good. They have heard their lesson, that they be rich in good works, that they distribute easily, that they communicate. They have heard already. Do ye now hear who are not yet rich? They who wish to be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many hurtful and foolish lusts. Do ye not fear? Hear what follows; which drown men in destruction and perdition. Do you not now fear? For avarice is the root of evil? Avarice is the wishing to be greedy and rich, even if not rich already. This is avarice. Do you not fear to be drowned in destruction and perdition? Do you not fear avarice the root of evil? Thou pluckest up out of your field the root of thorns, and will you not pluck up out of your heart the root of evil desires? Thou cleanseest your field from which your body gets its fruit, and will you not cleanse your heart where your God indwells? For avarice is the root of all these evils, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and entangled themselves in many sorrows.

“7. You have now heard what ye must do, you have heard what ye must fear, you have heard how the kingdom of heaven may be purchased, you have heard by what the kingdom of heaven may be hindered. Be all of one mind in obeying the word of God. God made both the rich and poor.’ Scripture says, ‘The rich and the poor meet together, the Lord is the Maker of them both.’ The rich and the poor meet together. In what way, except in this present life? The rich and the poor are born alike. You meet one another as you walk on the way together. Do not oppress or defraud. The one has need, the other has plenty. But the Lord is the maker of them both. By him who has, he helps him that needs; by him who has not, he proves him that has. We have heard, we have spoken; let us fear, let us take heed, let us pray, let us attain.”

The Dogma that God Ordains Catholics to Own Possessions

As a general rule, God ordains that Catholics own possessions

The God of the Old Testament is the same God as the God of the New Testament. And he ordains, as a general rule, that men should own lands, homes, and other possessions. And God ordains strict rules to protect men's possessions:

“And Isaac sowed in that land, and he found that same year a hundredfold. And the Lord blessed him. And the man was enriched, and he went on prospering and increasing till he became exceeding great. And he had possessions of sheep and of herds and a very great family.” (Gen. 26:12-14)

“And now divide the land in possession to the nine tribes, and to the half tribe of Manasses.” (Jos. 13:7)

“But the fields and the villages thereof he had given to Caleb, the son of Jephone, for his possession.” (Jos. 21:12)

“Thou shalt not take nor remove thy neighbour's landmark, which thy predecessors have set in thy possession, which the Lord thy God will give thee in the land that thou shalt receive to possess.” (Deut. 19:14)

“And she [St. Judith] was exceedingly beautiful, and her husband left her great riches, and very many servants, and large possessions of herds of oxen, and flocks of sheep.” (Judi. 8:7)

(See Leviticus, Chapters 25 and 27.)

Even kings were not allowed to take their subjects' land, houses, and other possessions unless they had a good reason. The evil King Achab wanted Naboth's land, and Naboth would not give it to him. The king despaired over it. His evil wife, Jezebel, then devised a plan to falsely accuse Naboth of blasphemy and thus have him stoned to death. She succeeded, and the king then took (stole) Naboth's land. (See 3 Ki. 21:1-16)

At times God punishes sinners or tries the just by taking away some or all of their possessions, and by making some slaves.⁵ God allowed the pagan Greeks to take away the possessions of the Israelites and take them into slavery because of their sins:

“And that they who were in Greece had a mind to go and to destroy them. And they had knowledge thereof, and they sent a general against them [Israelites], and fought with them, and many of them were slain, and they carried away their wives and their children captives, and spoiled them, and took possession of their land, and threw down their walls, and brought them to be their servants unto this day.” (1 Mac. 8:9-10)

And God tried Job's faith by allowing Satan to take away his possessions:

“Then Job rose up and rent his garments, and having shaven his head, fell down upon the ground and worshipped, and said: Naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done. Blessed be the name of the Lord.” (Job 1:20-21)

Adam and his descendants owned lands, homes, and other possessions

When God created Adam, he gave him possession of all the earth and thus everything in it, except the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil:

⁵ See my book [Catholic Captivity](#).

“He said: Let us make man to our image and likeness, and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth.” (Gen. 1:26)

“And he commanded him, saying: Of every tree of paradise thou shalt eat. But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat. For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death.” (Gen. 2:16-17)

The Old Testament records the history of Adam’s descendants, including God’s chosen people, and how they owned lands, homes, and other possessions. Some owned more than others, and some were made slaves and thus owned nothing. When the Israelites first occupied the Promised Land, God allotted to each tribe and family ownership of lands, homes, and other possessions. (See Josue, Chapters 13 to 22)

The Holy Family, apostles, and disciples owned possessions

Jesus said that there were some laws he did not come to abolish:

“Do not think that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. For amen I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot, or one tittle shall not pass of the law, till all be fulfilled.” (Mt. 5:17-18)

One such law regards possessions. One proof is that the Holy Family, apostles, and disciples owned lands, homes, and other possessions. For example,

The Holy Family and apostles and other believers owned homes:

“And Mary abode with her about three months; and she returned to her own house.” (Lk. 1:56)

“The disciples therefore departed again to their home.” (Jn. 20:10)

“Jesus was in Bethania in the house of Simon the leper.” (Mt. 26:6)

“Now it came to pass as they went that he entered into a certain town; and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.” (Lk. 10:38)

“And Mary rising up in those days, went into the hill country with haste into a city of Juda. And she entered into the house of Zachary and saluted Elizabeth.” (Lk. 1:39-40)

“And Mary abode with her about three months; and she returned to her own house.” (Lk. 1:56)

“Salute the brethren who are at Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church that is in his house.” (Col. 4:15)

“Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, who rule well their children and their own houses.” (1 Tim. 3:12)

After Jesus’ resurrection, the apostles owned boats for fishing:

“After this, Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias. And he shewed himself after this manner. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas, who is called Didymus, and Nathanael, who was of Cana of Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter saith to them: I go a fishing. They say to him: We also come with thee. And they went forth, and entered into the ship, and that night they caught nothing.” (Jn. 21:1-3)

Regarding St. Joseph, the Litany of St. Joseph says,

“V. He [God] made him [St. Joseph] lord of his household. R. And prince over all his possessions.”

It is also a natural law that men, as a general rule, have the right to own possessions. And it is against common sense and not even possible for all men to give up or sell all their possessions. One reason is that there would be no one to sell or give possessions to if no one was allowed to own possessions. And because no one is allowed to have possessions, there would be no one to give possessions to. The result is that all the possessions would have to be destroyed or thrown away, as no one can receive them, and thus no one would possess lands, homes, clothes, or food, and thus they would starve to death.

Many mansions in heaven for the elect

Jesus says that each of the elect will have a mansion in heaven:

“In my Father’s house there are many mansions. If not, I would have told you, because I go to prepare a place for you. And if I shall go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will take you to myself that where I am you also may be.” (Jn. 14:2-3)

While all the mansions are glorious and luxurious, some are more so than others, depending on the glory of the elect who inhabit them. For example, the creature who has the most glorious and luxurious mansion of all is the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God.

Church Fathers and others on Catholics owning possessions

St. Paul (d. 70)

St. Paul did not tell rich believers to sell or give away their possessions but only not to trust in them and to use them for good causes:

“Charge the rich of this world not to be highminded nor to trust in the uncertainty of riches, but in the living God, (who giveth us abundantly all things to enjoy,) to do good, to be rich in good works, to give easily, to communicate to others.” (1 Tim. 6:17-18)

If Jesus commanded all rich Catholics to sell or give up all their possessions, then St. Paul, as well as the apostles, sinned for not telling the rich to sell or give away all their possessions.

St. Paul tells Catholics to offer up some of their possessions on the Lord’s Day:

“On the first day of the week let every one of you put apart with himself, laying up what it shall well please him; that when I come, the collections be not then to be made.” (1 Cor. 16:2)

If they gave up all their possessions, there would have been nothing to offer up on the Lord’s Days. Therefore, they had possessions, some of which they offered to the Church on a weekly basis.

Pope St. Clement I (d. 99)

Pope St. Clement I, who knew the apostles, did not tell rich Catholics to sell all their possessions but to share them with the poor:

Pope St. Clement I, *Letter to the Corinthians*, 1st century: “Let the strong not despise the weak, and let the weak show respect to the strong. Let the rich man

provide for the wants of the poor; and let the poor man bless God, because he has given him one by whom his need may be supplied."⁶

Didascalia (1st to 3rd centuries)

The Didascalia teaches that the rich Catholics who have no children should adopt orphans. Hence it does not condemn riches and possessions, as long as they are used for good causes:

Didascalia, 1st to 3rd centuries: "If one of the children of Christians be an orphan, either a boy or a girl, it is good that if there be one of the brethren who hath no children, he take the boy in place of children, and let him take a girl, everyone who has a son... If there be people who do not wish because of their riches to do thus to orphan members, such people will meet also with the same, ...and strangers shall devour your land before your eyes."⁷

Apostolic Constitutions (1st to 4th centuries) and Proverbs 31

Quoting Proverbs 31, the Apostolic Constitutions praises the good rich wife and her possessions because she uses them wisely and for good causes:

Apostolic Constitutions, 1st to 4th centuries: "VIII. ...Therefore, O wife, next after the Almighty, our God..., you fear your husband, and reverence him, pleasing him alone, rendering yourself acceptable to him in the several affairs of life, that so on your account your husband may be called blessed, according to the Wisdom of Solomon (Proverbs 31), which thus speaks: 'Who can find a virtuous woman? For such a one is more precious than costly stones. The heart of her husband does safely trust in her, so that she shall have no need of spoil, for she does good to her husband all the days of her life. She buys wool and flax, and works profitable things with her hands. She is like the merchants' ships, she brings her food from far. She rises also while it is yet night, and gives meat to her household, and food to her maidens. She considers a field, and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard... She opens her hands to the needy; yea, she reaches forth her hands to the poor. Her husband takes no care of the affairs of his house; for all that are with her are clothed with double garments...'"

St. Cyprian (d. 258)

The Doctrine of the Fathers of the Church on the Right of Private Property, by apostate Rev. Charles F. Aiken (d. 1925), S.T.D.: "In the writings of St. Cyprian, the illustrious Bishop of Carthage in the middle of the third century, the rights as well as the duties of private property find fitting recognition. When he renounced the errors of paganism to become a Christian, he sold the greater part of his landed estates, which he had inherited from his wealthy parents, and devoted the proceeds to the relief of the poor. The remainder of his property he kept in his own name, employing the income chiefly in works of charity, while he himself lived a life of great simplicity. In a letter written from his secret place of refuge to his church in Carthage, urging the priests and deacons to take good care of the needy, he tells them he has left with the priest Rogation money of his own to be used to help indigent strangers, and that lest it might not be enough, he has sent them another sum by Naricus the acolyte:

'St. Cyprian, *Letter 35*: to the presbyters and deacons: "...I request that you will diligently take care of the widows, and of the sick, and

⁶ c. 38.

⁷ c. 17.

of all the poor. Moreover, you may supply the expenses for strangers, if any should be indigent, from my own portion, which I have left with Rogatianus, our fellow-presbyter; which portion, lest it should be all appropriated, I have supplemented by sending to the same by Naricus the acolyte another share, so that the sufferers may be more largely and promptly dealt with.'

"St. Cyprian was put under arrest on the eve of his martyrdom in his private gardens. So it is plain he saw nothing wrong in the private ownership of property, provided it was so used as to redound to the benefit of the needy. In the beautiful exhortation to almsgiving, which is among his extant writings, he teaches the rich that the wealth they possess is not for themselves alone, but must be made through liberal works of charity to minister to the common welfare. He reprehends not the ownership of wealth, but its miserly possession... In his treatise *On the Dress of Virgins*, he says: 'Lend your estate to God; give food to Christ... Otherwise a large estate is a temptation unless the wealth minister to good uses, so that every man, in proportion to his wealth, ought by his patrimony rather to redeem his transgressions than to increase them.'"

St. Ambrose (d. 397)

When St. Ambrose became a bishop, he sold or gave away most of his possessions. He gave some of his homes and lands to his brother Satyrus. If Catholics were not to own any possessions, then St. Ambrose would have sinned for giving his possessions to his brother. In his funeral oration for his brother, St. Ambrose praised his brother for not being greedy, for taking good care of his possessions, for using his riches in a good way, and for being poor in spirit:

St. Ambrose, *On the Decease of Satyrus*, Book 1, 4th century: "55. What, then, shall I say of his economy, a kind of continence regarding possessions? For he who takes care of his own does not seek other men's goods, nor is he puffed up by abundance who is contented with his own. For he did not wish to recover anything except his own, and that rather that he might not be cheated than that he might be richer. For he rightly called those who seek other men's goods hawks of money. But if avarice be the root of all evils, he who does not seek for money has certainly stripped himself of vices.

"56. ...And, indeed, he was not poor in means, but was so in spirit. Certainly we ought by no means to doubt of his happiness, who neither as a wealthy man delighted in riches, nor as a poor man thought that what he had was scanty.

"59. But what he was with his brother and sister, though all men were embraced in his good-will, our undivided patrimony testifies, and the inheritance neither distributed nor diminished, but preserved."

Hence St. Ambrose does not tell all rich Catholics to sell all their possession but to use them rightly.

Jesus told his apostles to not take a purse and then to take a purse (Mt. 10:8-10) (Lk. 22:35-38)

Therefore, we see that the Holy Family, apostles, and other Catholics owned possessions. With this in view, we can take in proper context the following verses:

"And having called his twelve disciples together, he gave them power over unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal all manner of diseases and all manner of infirmities... Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils. Freely have you received, freely give. Do not possess gold nor silver nor money in your

purses, nor scrip for your journey, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff. For the workman is worthy of his meat.” (Mt. 10:1, 8-10)

“And after these things the Lord appointed also other seventy-two: and he sent them two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself was to come... Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes; and salute no man by the way.” (Lk. 10:1, 4)

When Jesus sent his apostles and disciples to evangelize and gave them the power to do miracles, he wanted them to trust in him and thus not in money or in a staff for protection or in an excess of possessions. But he still allowed them to have some possessions, such as one coat and sandals instead of shoes:

“And he commanded them that they should take nothing for the way but a staff only: no scrip, no bread, nor money in their purse, But to be shod with sandals, and that they should not put on two coats.” (Mk. 6:8-9)

Hence Jesus did not tell them to leave behind all of their possessions when they went to evangelize. But they still owned those possessions that they did not take with them on this occasion. But on other occasions, when they were not evangelizing and not given the power to do miracles, the apostles and disciples did have a purse, money, and a scrip, etc. For example, in the following verses, Jesus tells his apostles to buy meats, and thus they had a purse with money in it to buy the meats:

“There cometh a woman of Samaria, to draw water. Jesus saith to her: Give me to drink. For his disciples were gone into the city to buy meats.” (Jn. 4:7-8)

And Jesus told them to buy things for the Passover:

“For some thought, because Judas had the purse, that Jesus had said to him: Buy those things which we have need of for the festival day or that he should give something to the poor.” (Jn. 13:29)

So Jesus, even when he was with his followers, did forbid them to have a purse and money, but only when they were evangelizing and given power to do miracles.

However, Jesus told them a time will come (from his Passion onward) that they must now take a purse and thus money, and a scrip, and a sword, etc., at all times and thus even when they go evangelizing, with or without attendant miracles:

“When I sent you without purse and scrip and shoes, did you want anything? But they said: Nothing. Then said he unto them: But now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise a scrip; and he that hath not, let him sell his coat and buy a sword. For I say to you, that this that is written must yet be fulfilled in me. And with the wicked was he reckoned. For the things concerning me have an end. But they said: Lord, behold here are two swords. And he said to them, It is enough.” (Lk. 22:35-38)

Therefore, Jesus abolished his decree as recorded in Matthew 10:1, 8-10 and replaced it with this one in Luke 22:35-38.

We also know that the apostles and disciples owned possessions (such as lands and homes), and Jesus never told them to sell them or give them away.⁸

Pope John XXII and the Franciscan Ideal of Absolute Poverty, by Melanie Brunner, 2006: “When Jesus sent the apostles out to preach, he expressly told them not to take money or belongings with them (Mt 10:9, Mc 6:8 and Lc 9:3); according to the [putative] pope [John XXII in *Quia vir reprobus*], the implication was that this had not been forbidden to them before. If the apostles had already renounced all

⁸ See in this book “The Holy Family, apostles, and disciples owned possessions,” p. 15.

temporal possessions, there would have been no need to command them to leave their belongings behind.

“This applied even more to the wider circle of disciples: John cited the cases of Joseph of Arimathia, Simon the Leper, Mary Magdalene and Martha of Bethany who all owned various types of property...

“The status of the apostles changed while they were on their preaching tours, and this was when the ‘Franciscan’ passages of the Bible came into their own. While they were out preaching, the apostles were forbidden to own money or to carry personal property with them. These passages formed the basis for the Franciscan claim that Christ and the apostles had been absolutely poor, that this poverty involved a renunciation of dominium and that the Franciscan order observed a truly apostolic form of poverty.⁹ However, John XXII immediately claimed... it could only have been a temporary injunction. Additionally, not only the apostles but also the seventy disciples were told not to carry possessions with them (Mt 10:9), and as John had already pointed out earlier, they certainly did own property.

“The next change in the status of the apostles before the death of Christ was after they had returned from preaching; at this point they definitely had temporal things. The pope used the miracle of the bread and fish as one of the examples, arguing that the original loaves and fish belonged to the apostles. He also quoted the fact that the apostles must have had money when they were sent by Jesus to buy food, and that there was at least one sword among them at the time of Jesus’s arrest. Additionally he argued that Scripture assumed that the apostles had sacculos [purses] for money, and that they had several tunics each.”¹⁰

The context of Jesus telling his followers to renounce all possessions (Lk. 14:33)

So what did Jesus mean when he said the following?

“Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth cannot be my disciple.” (Lk. 14:33)

Jesus did not say sell or give away all possessions but only to renounce them. God does not want all of the faithful to literally sell or give away all their possessions, as this would not be practical, especially for those who have secular vocations and thus do not have religious vocations. And it is God’s will that men (the faithful included) have a right, as a general rule, to own possessions. One reason we know Jesus did not forbid the faithful to own possessions is that he and his followers owned possessions.¹¹ Therefore, Jesus does not mean that every Catholic must sell or give away all of his possessions, for that would be heretical communism, which forbids men to own or possess anything.

Jesus means that the faithful must not put their possessions over God and the salvation of their souls. Possessions are temporary things that will thus pass away, but souls do not pass away. Souls will either end up in heaven or gehenna:

Catholic Commentary on Lk. 14:33: “**Renounce:** He that is a Christian man must make his account that if he be put to it (as he often may be in times of persecution) he must renounce all that ever he hath rather than forsake the Catholic faith.”

Pope St. Gregory I (d. 604), *Homily 36*: “A person attached to his earthly possessions more than is right refuses to come to the Lord’s dinner... Hold on to the things of this world so that you are not held in the world by them; so that you possess earthly things, and they do not possess you; so that your heart controls your

⁹ Francis of Assisi held the heresy the Holy Family and apostles did not own possessions. And the Franciscans who followed him also held this heresy. (See my refutation *Against Francis of Assisi: Francis’ Heresy that the Holy Family and Disciples Owned No Possessions, Were Destitute, and Begged.*)

¹⁰ c. 4, sec. 4, pp. 174-175.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

possessions... Therefore, you should use the things of time, and long for those of eternity. Let temporal things be for the journey, and long for the everlasting things of your arrival. Consider whatever goes on in this world as happening on the periphery and direct the eyes of the mind toward what is ahead... You can abandon all things even while holding on to them, by attending to your temporal affairs in such a way as to tend wholeheartedly toward what is eternal.”

Hence, by renouncing their possessions, Catholics are declaring that they are willing to give them up if necessary in order to save their souls. If the Devil knows you love your possessions more than God and your own soul, he will use them against you in order to keep or place you on the road to damnation.

The context of “go sell what thou hast and give to the poor” (Mt. 19:21-22)

“Jesus saith to him: If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come follow me. And when the young man had heard this word, he went away sad, for he had great possessions.” (Mt. 19:21-22)

We know Jesus did not tell all of his followers to give up all their possessions because his followers owned lands, homes, and other possessions.¹² So it would be unjust for Jesus to tell all rich men to give up all their possessions. One proof is Zacheus, who was rich. Jesus praised him for giving half of his possessions to the poor and thus did not tell him to sell all his possessions:

“And behold, there was a man named Zacheus, who was the chief of the publicans, and he was rich... But Zacheus standing, said to the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wronged any man of anything, I restore him fourfold. Jesus said to him: This day is salvation come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham.” (Lk. 19:2, 8-9)

St. Ambrose, *Exposition of the Gospel of St. Luke*, Book 8, c. 389: “85. ...For while wealth is a stumbling block to the evil-minded, in the good it is an aid to virtue. Zacheus, who was called by Christ, was surely a rich man. But by giving half of his wealth to the poor, and restoring four-fold what he had acquired unjustly, he received a reward that surpassed the benefits he conferred.”¹³

So why did Jesus tell the rich man, as recorded in Matthew 19, to give up all his possessions? It is because this rich man was greedy and loved his riches more than he loved God and thus idolized them.¹⁴

The context of Jesus telling his apostles and disciples to leave their houses (Mk. 10:29-30)

“Jesus answering, said: Amen I say to you, there is no man who hath left house or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who shall not receive an hundred times as much, now in this time; houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come life everlasting.” (Mk. 10:29-30)

Note carefully, Jesus did not tell his apostles to sell or give away their possessions but to leave their possessions. Hence, when Jesus told the apostles and disciple to leave their homes for his sake, he did not tell them to sell them or give them away. And when he told them to leave their families, he did not mean that they must not have families anymore and that they must not visit

¹² See in this book “The Holy Family, apostles, and disciples owned possessions,” p. 15.

¹³ *PL*, v. 15, col. 1791.

¹⁴ See in this book “The rich man, then, that Jesus was speaking to, as recorded in Mt. 19:21-22, was greedy,” p. 7.

them. We know this because after Jesus said this, St. Peter still owned his home and visited his wife:

“And when Jesus was come into Peter’s house, he saw his wife’s mother lying, and sick of a fever.” (Mt. 8:14)

Jesus meant that they would not live in their homes and be with their family members on a regular basis anymore. And Jesus said, in the same verse, that he would give them other houses to own and thus possess:

“Who shall not receive an hundred times as much, now in this time; houses....” (Mk. 10:30)

Therefore, Jesus did not tell his followers that they must sell or give away their possessions, and that they must not own homes and other possessions.

Jesus also told the apostles they will no longer be fishers of fish but fishers of men:

“And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea (for they were fishers). And he saith to them: Come ye after me, and I will make you to be fishers of men. And they immediately leaving their nets, followed him.” (Mt. 4:18-20)

But Jesus did not mean they could no longer go fishing, but only in their spare time, as their main job is following Jesus and evangelizing. We know this because on one occasion, when Jesus appeared to the apostles after his resurrection, they were fishing:

“There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas, who is called Didymus, and Nathanael, who was of Cana of Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter saith to them: I go a fishing. They say to him: We also come with thee. And they went forth, and entered into the ship. And that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore, yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus therefore said to them: Children, have you any meat? They answered him: No. He saith to them: Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and you shall find. They cast therefore; and now they were not able to draw it, for the multitude of fishes.” (Jn. 21:2-6)

The context of selling possessions and holding all things in common (Acts 2, 4, 5)

If the following verses are not taken in correct context, they could seem to hold the heresy that Christians are not to own any possessions, which is the heresy of communism:

“And all they that believed were together and had all things common. Their possessions and goods they sold and divided them to all, according as everyone had need.” (Acts 2:44-45)

“And the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul, neither did anyone say that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but all things were common unto them... For neither was there any one needy among them. For as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the price of the things they sold and laid it down before the feet of the apostles. And distribution was made to everyone, according as he had need. And Joseph, who, by the apostles, was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, by interpretation, The son of consolation,) a Levite, a Cyprian born, having land, sold it and brought the price, and laid it at the feet of the apostles.” (Acts 4:32-37)

Selling possessions

In the early days of the Catholic Church, the Church had no money or possessions, and thus it needed money and possessions for its clergy and churches and to help the poor. Hence some Catholics sold some of their possessions (such as homes and lands) to give to the Church and to those in need.

But it does not say that, in every case, they sold all of their homes and lands. It does not say “All their possessions and goods they sold and divided,” but only “Their possessions and goods they sold and divided.” (Acts 2:44) We know that they did not sell or give away all their possessions because they owned clothes, food, animals, and other things and had money to buy things they needed. And we know that many Catholics did not sell or give away all of their homes and lands, because many owned homes and lands.¹⁵

Some Catholics sold or gave away only some of their homes and lands but not all. For example, Ananias sold only a piece of his land in order to give the money from the sale to the Catholic Church. But he only gave the Church some of the money from the sale and still maintained possession of the land by deception, and thus God killed him:

“But a certain man named Ananias with Saphira his wife, sold a piece of land, and by fraud kept back part of the price of the land, his wife being privy thereunto; and bringing a certain part of it, laid it at the feet of the apostles. But Peter said: Ananias, why hath Satan tempted thy heart that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Spirit and by fraud keep part of the price of the land? Whilst it remained, did it not remain to thee? And after it was sold, was it not in thy power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? Thou hast not lied to men, but to God. And Ananias hearing these words, fell down, and gave up the spirit. And there came great fear upon all that heard it. And the young men rising up, removed him, and carrying him out, buried him.” (Acts 5:1-6)

The main point is that some Catholics sold only some of their homes and lands but not all.¹⁶

In the following quotes, St. Ambrose does not tell all rich men to sell all their possessions, but instead tells them not to trust in their riches and to use their riches to help the poor and for other good causes:

St. Ambrose, *Sermon* 63, 4th century: “86. Let no man suppose that because he is rich, more deference is to be paid him. In the Church he is rich who is rich in faith, for the faithful has a whole world of riches. What wonder is it if the faithful possesses the world, who possesses the inheritance of Christ, which is of more value than the world? ‘Ye were redeemed with the Precious Blood,’ was certainly said to all, not to the rich only. But if you will be rich, obey him who says: ‘Be ye holy in all your conversation.’ He is speaking not to the rich only but to all, for he judges without respect of persons...

“87. Do not trust in riches, for all such things are left here, faith alone will accompany you. And righteousness indeed will go with you if faith has led the way. Why do riches entice you? ‘Ye were not redeemed with gold and silver,’ with possessions, or silk garments, ‘from your vain conversation, but with the precious Blood of Christ.’ He then is rich who is an heir of God, a joint heir with Christ. Despise not the poor man, he has made you spiritually rich. ‘This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.’ Do not reject a poor man, Christ when he was rich became poor, and became poor because of you, that by his poverty he might make you rich. Do not then as though rich exalt yourself...

“89. But if you will be rich, you must be poor. Then shall you in all things be rich, if you are poor in spirit. It is not property which makes rich, but the spirit.

¹⁵ See in this book “The Holy Family, apostles, and disciples owned possessions,” p. [15](#).

¹⁶ For examples of apostles and other saints who owned homes and lands, See in this book “Church Fathers and others on Catholics owning possessions,” p. [16](#).

“92. But riches themselves are not blameable. For ‘the ransom of a man's life are his riches,’ since he that gives to the poor redeems his soul. So that even in these material riches there is place for virtue. You are like steersmen in the vast sea. If a man steers his course well, he quickly passes over the sea so as to attain to the port, but one who knows not how to direct his property is drowned together with his freight. And so it is written: ‘The wealth of rich men is a most strong city.’”

St. Ambrose, *Exposition of the Gospel of St. Luke*, c. 389: “[Book 5] 69. While agreeing that very rich people have many temptations to evil, one can also find—in the possession of wealth—an invitation to virtue. Undoubtedly virtue does not need the resources of the rich, and the contribution made by the poor is more worthy of praise than the liberality of the rich. At the same time, the people whom the Lord here condemns by his divine sentence are not those who have money, but those who do not know how to employ their money. The poor person is more worthy of praise when he gives with a good grace, and is not hindered by considerations of his own need of cash; he is more worthy of praise when, provided he has enough for his needs, he does not look on himself as being poor. In the same way, the rich person is more blameworthy, for he should at least have thanked God for what he has received; he should never have kept hidden and profitless goods that were meant for the use and enjoyment of all; he should not have dug a hole in the ground and there buried his treasures (Mt 25:18). It is not the fortune, but the heart, that is at fault.”

“[Book 8] 13. ...For not all poverty is holy nor riches sinful.¹⁷ ... 85. ...For while wealth is a stumbling block to the evil-minded, in the good it is an aid to virtue. Zacheus, who was called by Christ, was surely a rich man. But by giving half of his wealth to the poor, and restoring four-fold what he had acquired unjustly, he received a reward that surpassed the benefits he conferred... 86. ...That ye may know that not all rich men are covetous.¹⁸”

Holding all things in common in context

“And the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul, neither did anyone say that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but all things were common unto them.” (Acts 4:32-37)

It says “he possessed” things, so the possessions were his. But he did not treat all of his possessions as his own but some of them were due to others in need. In the following verses it says that some Catholics sold or divided their possessions to give to Catholics in need:

“And all they that believed were together and had all things common. Their possessions and goods they sold and divided them to all, according as everyone had need.” (Acts 2:44-45)

The holding all things in common does not mean a Catholic did not own possessions or that all possessions were owned by all Catholics and thus not by any one Catholic. That is heretical communism.

Hence, it does not mean Catholics did not literally own possessions, or else how could they sell or give away what they did not own? Their possessions, then, were transferred from Catholics to Catholics, Catholics with excess to Catholics in need. And thus the Catholics in need then owned these possessions. The possessions the richer brothers gave to the poorer brothers were then owned by the poorer brothers. And thus a balance was struck, as St. Paul says:

“Now, therefore, perform ye it also indeed; that as your mind is forward to be willing, so it may be also to 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

¹⁷ PL, v. 15, col. 1769.

¹⁸ PL, v. 15, col. 1791.

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 supply their want, that their abundance also may supply your [spiritual] 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)

Therefore, St. Paul does not tell rich Catholics to sell all their possessions or that the rich and poor literally own their possessions in common. He tells the rich to give only his excess to help the poor so that there would be a balance (equality) regarding their needs—“let your abundance supply their want.” And the poor supply the spiritual wants of the rich by praying for them:

Catholic Commentary of on 2 Cor. 8:12-13. “**Equality:** 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.”

Catholic Commentary on Acts 4:32: “**All things were common:** Happy would it be for society if the rich of the present day were to imitate this charity of the first disciples, by distributing to those that want. Both would hereby become more happy; nor would the rich derive less pleasure from such actions than the poor.”

The rich, then, are to treat their excess riches as if they are in common with the poor and thus give to the poor or other good causes. And a Catholic must share or loan his possessions, if possible, to Catholics in need, if they be worthy and honest.

The rich, then, in mercy and justice, owe the excess of their riches to the poor and other good causes:

“Reject not the petition of the afflicted, and turn not away thy face from the needy. Turn not away thy eyes from the poor for fear of anger, and leave not to them that ask of thee to curse thee behind thy back. For the prayer of him that curseth thee in the bitterness of his soul shall be heard, for he that made him will hear him. Make thyself affable to the congregation of the poor, and humble thy soul to the ancient, and bow thy head to a great man. Bow down thy ear cheerfully to the poor, and pay what thou owest, and answer him peaceable words with mildness.” (Eccus. 4:4-8)

The rich man, then, owes alms to the poor who are worthy of alms not just in mercy but in justice. It is the same as when an owner of a company owes wages to his workers. The money the owner has belongs to him, or else how can he give it to the workers? But the owner must treat that part of his money as if it is not his own because he must pay it to his workers. And if he does not, he is guilty of an injustice, of stealing, and violates the law.

“Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl in your miseries, which shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth eaten... Behold the hire of the labourers, who have reaped down your fields, which by fraud has been kept back by you, crieth: and the cry of them hath entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.” (Jam. 5:1-5)

Here is what some of the Church Fathers and others teach on this topic:

St. Ambrose, *De Nabuthe Jezraelita*, 4th century: “You are not bestowing on the poor anything of your own; you are giving back something that belongs to him. For what has been granted for the common use of all, you usurp for yourself alone. The earth belongs to all, not simply to the rich. You are, then, not conferring a gratuitous alms, you are restoring what is due.”¹⁹

St. Ambrose, *Exposition of the Gospel of St. Luke*, Book 8, c. 389: “85. ...For while wealth is a stumbling block to the evil-minded, in the good it is an aid to virtue. Zacheus, who was called by Christ, was surely a rich man. But by giving half of his

¹⁹ *PL*, 53, cap. xii.

wealth to the poor, and restoring four-fold what he had acquired unjustly, he received a reward that surpassed the benefits he conferred. (Lk. 19:2, 8-9)”²⁰

St. Ambrose, then, teaches that wealth and riches are good for a virtuous man because he uses some of his riches for the needy and other good causes.

Apostate Basil of Cesarea, *Sermon to the Rich*, 4th century: “1. ...For it takes wealth to care for the needy; a little paid out for the necessity of each person you take on, and things get parceled out and is spent upon them.”²¹

Apostate Basil, *Homily on Psalm 61*, 4th century: “Wherefore it has been rightly said: If riches flow in, do not set your heart on it. Do not be devoted to them in mind, but take advantage of them, not loving them more intensely as if they were some good, or admiring them, but admitting their service as a kind of instrument.”²²

Basil does not tell the rich to sell or give away all of their possessions, their riches, but to not set their heart on them, and to use them for their needs and to help others in need. Apostate Gregory of Nazianzen teaches the same:

Apostate Gregory Nazianzen, *Oration 36*, 4th century: “12. ...You, who are aiming at wealth, give ear to what the prophet says: ‘If riches abound, set not your heart on them.’ Bear in mind that you are leaning on a frail support. Lighten the boat somewhat that it may sail the more easily.”²³

The fact that the Bible, Church Fathers, and others teach that Christians can own possessions, that there are good rich men, and that they counseled Christians on the proper use of their possessions is one proof against the communist heresy that Christians, as well as anyone else, must not own possessions.

Lastly, the logical consequence of the communist heresy that men do not own their money and possessions is that it leads to chaos and lawlessness because men can take away other men’s money and possessions anytime they want and for any reason because everything belongs to everybody. In the end, nobody’s money and possessions would be secure and thus only the strongest would have all the money and possessions, which the weaker would not be able to take from them, even though they would have a right to take them, according to this heresy. The result is that all kinds of violence and deception would ensue from men trying to take away other men’s money and possessions. This heresy, then, condones and promotes stealing. After all, if men own nothing, then nothing can be stolen from them.

St. Cyprian condemns the heresy that Christ commanded all Catholics to sell all their possessions and be poor

St. Cyprian condemns the heresy that Christ commanded all Catholics to sell all their possessions and to be poor, or worse, to be destitute. He teaches that Catholics who give their excess riches to the Church, the poor, and other good causes will never be in want and will always have more than they need:

St. Cyprian, *Trieste 8*, On Works and Alms, 3rd century: “7. ...And again: ‘Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust do corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust does corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.’ (Mt. 6:19-21 And when he wished to set forth a man perfect and complete by the

²⁰ *PL*, v. 15, col. 1791.

²¹ *PG* 31, 282.

²² *PG* 29, 482.

²³ *PG*, vol. xxxvi., col. 279.

observation of the law, he said, 'If you will be perfect, go and sell that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me.' (Mt. 19:21)...

"9. If you dread and fear, lest, if you begin to act thus abundantly, your patrimony being exhausted with your liberal dealing, you may perchance be reduced to poverty; be of good courage in this respect, be free from care; that cannot be exhausted whence the service of Christ is supplied, whence the heavenly work is celebrated. Neither do I vouch for this on my own authority, but I promise it on the faith of the Holy Scriptures and on the authority of the divine promise. The Holy Spirit speaks by Solomon, and says, 'He that gives unto the poor shall never lack, but he that turns away his eye shall be in great poverty'; showing that the merciful and those who do good works cannot want, but rather that the sparing and barren hereafter come to want. Moreover, the blessed Apostle Paul, full of the grace of the Lord's inspiration, says: 'He that ministers seed to the sower, shall both minister bread for your food, and shall multiply your seed sown, and shall increase the growth of the fruits of your righteousness, that in all things you may be enriched.' (2 Cor. 9:10) And again: 'The administration of this service shall not only supply the wants of the saints, but shall be abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God' (2 Cor. 9:12), because, while thanks are directed to God for our almsgivings and labours by the prayer of the poor, the wealth of the doer is increased by the retribution of God. And the Lord in the Gospel, already considering the hearts of men of this kind, and with prescient voice denouncing faithless and unbelieving men, bears witness, and says: 'Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? Or, What shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For these things the Gentiles seek. And your Father knows that you have need of all these things. Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.' (Matthew 6:31-33) He says that all these things shall be added and given to them who seek the kingdom and righteousness of God. For the Lord says, that when the day of judgment shall come, those who have laboured in his Church are admitted to receive the kingdom...

"11. Are you afraid that your patrimony perchance may fall short, if you should begin to do liberally from it? Yet when has it ever happened that resources could fail the righteous man, since it is written, 'The Lord will not slay with famine the righteous soul?' (Prv. 10:3)... Are afraid that food should be wanting to you, labouring and deserving well of the Lord, although he himself in the Gospel bears witness, for the rebuke of those whose mind is doubtful and faith small, and says: 'Behold the fowls of heaven, that they sow not, nor reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feeds them: are you not of more value than they?' ' Matthew 5:26 God feeds the fowls, and daily food is afforded to the sparrows; and to creatures which have no sense of things divine there is no want of drink or food. Do you think that to a Christian— do you think that to a servant of the Lord — do you think that to one given up to good works — do you think that to one that is dear to his Lord, anything will be wanting?"

Dogmas on Poverty and Begging

There are two kinds of poverty, of being poor:

1. Moderate Poverty: A man (or religious order) is able to supply for his necessities but lives in a poor condition regarding housing, clothing, and food. But he, nevertheless, has all that he needs to survive by the efforts of his own labor.
2. Extreme Poverty: A man (or religious order) is not able to supply for his needs and thus depends on begging or alms to survive. Extreme poverty is destitution or indigence, a level of poverty in which real hardship and deprivation are suffered and the necessities of life are wholly lacking.

Moderate poverty is not an evil

Moderate poverty is not evil and can even be a great good to keep men free from greed if they would otherwise fall prey to it if they were not poor. And it can free men from the excess cares that come to those who are not poor.

This is not to put down the rich and the middle class. Each condition, poor, middle class, and rich has its virtues and crosses. There are evil poor men, evil middle class men, and evil rich men. And there are good poor men, good middle class men, and good rich men. So beware of the heresy that all poor men are good and all middle class or rich men are evil, as stated in the previous chapter.

The Holy Family (Jesus, Mary, and Joseph) lived in moderate poverty. St. Joseph and Jesus provided for the needs of the family by working as carpenters. Even though the Holy Family lived in moderate poverty, they were not destitute and had many good things, but in due season and moderation.

An example of a religious order that lives by moderate poverty is the Benedictine Order. The motto of the order is *Ora et Labora*, Work and Pray. Hence the members work for a living but do not own any possessions. The fruit and other income of their work go to the order, and then the order supplies all of their needs. And they live in a poor condition regarding housing, clothing, and food, but they also have good things in due season and moderation. Hence the order does not promote or encourage begging unless absolutely necessary if the order is reduced to extreme poverty.

A man who has great riches can also live in moderate poverty if he uses his riches as if they were not his own and thus shares his riches with the needy and for other good causes. It is as if he were poor even though he has great riches. “One...is as it were poor, when he hath great riches.” (Prov. 13:7)

Extreme poverty and begging are great evils

Extreme poverty and begging are not good things but evil things. They are either a curse to sinners or a trial for the just. Regarding the evils of extreme poverty and begging, the Word of God teaches the following:

As a curse to sinners:

“But if thou wilt not hear the voice of the Lord thy God to keep and to do all his commandments and ceremonies which I command thee this day, all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee... The Lord shall send upon thee famine and hunger, ...May the Lord afflict thee with miserable want.” (Deut. 28:15, 20, 22)

“I have been young and now am old, and I have not seen the just forsaken nor his seed seeking bread.” (Ps 37:25)

“My son, lead not a beggar’s life, for better it is to die than to beg. The life of him that looketh toward another man’s table is not to be counted a life, for he feedeth his soul with another man’s meat. But a man well instructed and taught will look to himself. Begging will be sweet in the mouth of the unwise, but in his belly there shall burn a fire.” (Eccus. 40:29-32)

As a trial for the just:

King David: “For my life is wasted with grief and my years in sighs. My strength is weakened through poverty and my bones are disturbed. I am become a reproach among all my enemies and very much to my neighbours and a fear to my acquaintance.” (Ps. 30:11-12)

God reduced Job to extreme poverty to try his faith. And Job remained faithful to God and thus passed the test:

“Then Job rose up and rent his garments, and having shaven his head, fell down upon the ground and worshipped, and said: Naked came I out of my mother’s womb and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done. Blessed be the name of the Lord.” (Job 1:20-21)

It is God’s will that Catholic nations eradicate extreme poverty and begging so that God can grant a blessing to that nation:

“And there shall be no poor [extreme poverty] nor beggar among you, that the Lord thy God may bless thee in the land which he will give thee in possession... There will not be wanting poor [extreme poverty] 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. 15:4, 11)

Therefore, if there is extreme poverty and begging in a so-called Catholic nation, then that nation is either a bad Catholic nation or a nominal Catholic nation.

Blessed are the poor does not mean extreme poverty is a good thing

In Luke 6:20, Jesus says,

“Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.” (Lk. 6:20)

But a qualification is made in Matthew 5:3 when Jesus says,

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 5:3)

Hence Jesus primarily means the poor in spirit, as even rich men can be poor in spirit:

“But to whom shall I have respect, but to him that is poor and little and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my words?” (Isa. 66:2)

St Ambrose, *Expositions on the Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke*, 380s, Commentary on Luke 6:20: “‘Blessed,’ it says, ‘Are the poor’ (Saint Luke 6:20). Not all the poor are blessed, for poverty is neutral. The poor can be either good or evil, unless, perchance, the blessed pauper is to be understood as he whom the Prophet described, saying, ‘A righteous poor man is better than a rich liar’ (Proverbs of Solomon 19:22). Blessed is the poor man who cried, and the Lord heard him (Psalm 33:6), the man poor in offence, the man poor in vices, the poor man in whom the prince of this world finds nothing (cf. Saint John 14:30)... Hence, Matthew fully revealed, saying, ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit’ (Saint Matthew 5:3), for a man poor in spirit is not puffed up, is not exalted in the mind of his own flesh.”

Hence, when Jesus says blessed are the poor in spirit, he means good Catholics because he would never say unbelievers or bad Catholics are blessed.

Also, when Jesus says blessed are the poor, he does not mean that extreme poverty and begging are good or blessed things even though the righteous who suffer it get many blessings, graces, and rewards for enduring it with faith, patience, and perseverance. In the same way, the Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus was a great evil that was turned into the greatest good, the greatest of all blessings. And in the same way that the evil of persecution that the just undergo is turned into a great good and blessing by the many graces they gain who endure it with faith, patience, and perseverance, so also, is the great evil of extreme poverty and begging turned into a great good and blessing by the many graces the just gain by enduring it with faith, patience, and perseverance, as was the case with Job and the poor beggar Lazarus. (Lk. 16:19-22) But let no one say that extreme poverty and begging should be sought after as if they are good things:

“Woe to you that call evil good and good evil.” (Isa. 5:20)

On Giving Alms

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 corporal work of mercy most often 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 that 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. 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 under pain of sin

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 the 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 of certain needy men who are 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;
- He must not have enough money to pay for it;
- You must have direct 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 direct 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 gehenna 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

To 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 mothers or children. Some of them call these people useless feeders. These cheap, stingy, unloving so-called Catholics are certainly like the damned-to-gehenna 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)

To men who will use the alms for a sinful purpose

You must not give alms to men who will use them 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.” (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, and thus 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.

To 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 giving to a non-Catholic when they are under similar 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. 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 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.²⁴ Hence in an ideal Catholic State, no one is in dire need. All have more than enough food, shelter, and other necessities of life:

“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

²⁴ See in this book “And thus a balance was struck, as St. Paul says,” p. 24.

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 GoFundMe 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 by the Catholic Church. And you must not give donations to organizations and institutions the Catholic Church disapproves of.

If you do not have access to a competent Catholic authority, then you must investigate the organization, institution, or GoFundMe 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 sin 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 of 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 to 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,²⁵ 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)

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, practicing 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 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)

²⁵ The apostate Mother Theresa cared nothing for souls but only 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 temporarily help your body but it cannot help your soul. If you die with a full stomach but as a pagan you will go to gehenna 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).