

**WHAT DOES THE CHURCH
AND THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT**

CARING FOR THE POOR?

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Study and Catechesis purposes.

POOR AND NEEDY – “Those who are oppressed because of the lack of bodily necessities. The Church continues, as always, to assist the poor in their plight by appealing to the generosity of the faithful” (Catholic Dictionary, p. 599).

POOR BOX – “Sometimes called the alms-box, a slotted box to collect alms for the needy; found in churches from the earliest days of Christianity” (Catholic Dictionary, p. 599).

ALMS – “(From Greek: *eleemosyne*, mercy, pity) Material or financial offerings for the poor, prompted by charity. Provision for the needy is admonished throughout the Old Testament (cf. Prv. 3:27; 22:9; 28:27; Tb 4:6-11; Sir 3:30-4:10; Dn 4:24). Giving all that one has to the poor is a condition for discipleship (Mt 6:24; 19:21; Mk. 10:21; Lk 18:22); thus the early Church cared for the needs of the poor in the community (Acts 4:32-37; 2 Cor 8-9). In Christian tradition, almsgiving is a corporal work of mercy” (Catholic Dictionary, p. 54).

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2247 – “*Works of mercy* are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities. Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently. The corporal works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead. Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God.”

'He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food must do likewise. But give for alms those things which are within; and behold, everything is clean for you. If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?' (p. 588).

CARING FOR THE POOR IN SCRIPTURE

Deuteronomy 15:7-8 - ⁷ *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,*
⁸ *But shalt open it to the poor man, thou shalt lend him, that which thou perceivest he hath need of.*
(Douay-Rheims Version)

Prov. 11:25 - *Be generous, and you will be prosperous. Help others, and you will be helped.*
(Good News Translation)

Prov. 14:31 - *If you oppress poor people, you insult the God who made them; but kindness shown to the poor is an act of worship.* (Good New Translation)

Prov. 19:17 - *He that hath mercy on the poor, lendeth to the Lord: and he will repay him.* (Douay-Rheims Version)

Prov. 21:13 - *If you refuse to listen to the cry of the poor, your own cry for help will not be heard.* (Good New Translation)

Prov. 22:9 - *The Lord blesses everyone*

who freely gives food to the poor. (Contemporary English Version)

Prov. 25:21-22 - ²¹ *If your enemies are hungry, give them something to eat. And if they are thirsty, give them something to drink. ²² This will be the same as piling burning coals on their heads. And the Lord will reward you. (Contemporary English Version)*

Lev. 19:9-10 - ⁹ *When you harvest your grain, always leave some of it standing along the edges of your fields and don't pick up what falls on the ground. ¹⁰ Don't strip your grapevines clean or gather the grapes that fall off the vines. Leave them for the poor and for those foreigners who live among you. I am the Lord your God. (Contemporary English Version)*

Psa. 41:1-3 - ¹ *Happy are those who are concerned for the poor; the Lord will help them when they are in trouble. ² The Lord will protect them and preserve their lives; he will make them happy in the land; he will not abandon them to the power of their enemies. ³ The Lord will help them when they are sick and will restore them to health. (Good News Translation)*

Matthew 19:21 - *Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go and sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven; then come and follow me." (Good News Translation)*

Luke 3:11 - ¹¹ *He said to them in reply, "Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who*

has none. And whoever has food should do likewise.” (New American Bible)

2 Cor. 9:6 - *Now this I say: He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly: and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap blessings.*
(Douay-Rheims Version)

Gal. 2:10 - *Only that we should be mindful of the poor: which same thing also I was careful to do.*
(Douay-Rheims Version)

James 1:27 - *What God the Father considers to be pure and genuine religion is this: to take care of orphans and widows in their suffering and to keep oneself from being corrupted by the world.* (Good News Translation)

1. Read Deuteronomy 15:7-8. If there are poor among you:
a. do not be selfish or greedy toward them. b. don't be mean and selfish with your money. c. do not be selfish and refuse to help them. d. you must not shut your heart or hand against them. e. all of the above.

2. Read Proverbs 11:25. If you want to prosper: a. be generous. b. help others. c. don't pay workers a fair wage.

3. Read Proverbs 14:31. If you oppress poor people: a. you can make more money. b. you insult God.

4. Read Proverbs 19:17. He that has mercy on the poor: a. will be rewarded for what he has done. b. lendeth to the Lord. c. will be well repaid. d. all of the above.

5. Read Proverbs 21:13. If you refuse to listen to the cry of the poor: a. don't expect to be heard when you cry out for help. b. you will be ignored in your own time of need. c. all of the above.

- 6. Read Proverbs 22:9.** The Lord blesses everyone who: a. feeds the poor. b. shares his food with those who are poor. c. all of the above.
- 7. Read Proverbs 25:21-22.** If your enemies are hungry: a. starve them out. b. let them suffer. c. give them something to eat.
- 8. Read Leviticus 19:9-10.** Always leave something: a. to give to the poor. b. to deposit in the bank. c. in your wallet.
- 9. Read Psalms 41:1-3.** Those who are kind to the poor: a. will not have many rich friends. b. will not be liked. c. the Lord will help. d. the Lord will protect and preserve. d. will not be abandoned to their enemies. e. the Lord will help when they are sick and will restore them.
- 10. Read Matthew 19:21.** By giving to the poor, you can have: a. a lot less money. b. you can have riches in heaven. c. bad credit.
- 11. Read Luke 3:11.** Whoever has abundance should: a. have a garage sale. b. share with the poor.
- 12. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6.** If you give little, you will get little. True or False
- 13. Read Galatians 2:10.** The Apostles told Paul to: a. save his money for a rainy day. b. always remember to help the poor.
- 14. Read James 1:27.** What God the Father considers to be pure and genuine religion is: a. to give a dollar in the offering each week. b. to help and care for orphans and widows.

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