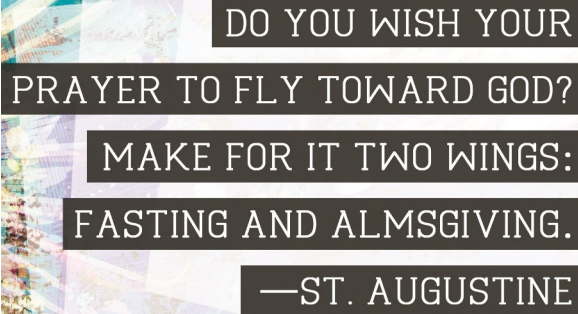


## ALMSGIVING



DO YOU WISH YOUR  
PRAYER TO FLY TOWARD GOD?  
MAKE FOR IT TWO WINGS:  
FASTING AND ALMSGIVING.  
—ST. AUGUSTINE

In addition to prayer and fasting, the other important element of Lent is almsgiving. That's a word that we don't use too often. When you look in the dictionary at the word alms you will find entries such as: donations, contributions, charities, gifts, assistance, etc. So it goes then that almsgiving is to make charitable contributions or gifts or donations. And this giving does not necessarily have to be financial. It can also be the giving of time. You can give of your time to a charitable group or to an individual in need.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says the following about Lenten almsgiving:

“The foundational call of Christians to charity is a frequent theme of the Gospels. During Lent, we are asked to focus more intently on "almsgiving," which means donating money or goods to the poor and performing other acts of charity. As one of the three pillars of Lenten practice, almsgiving is "a witness to fraternal charity" and "a work of justice pleasing to God." (CCC no. 2462)

And Pope Francis has said the following:

“*Almsgiving* sets us free from greed and helps us to regard our neighbor as a brother or sister. What I possess is never mine alone. How I would like almsgiving to become a genuine style of life for each of us! How I would like us, as Christians, to follow the example of the Apostles and see in the sharing of our possessions a tangible witness of the communion that is ours in the Church! For this reason, I echo Saint Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians to take up a collection for the community of Jerusalem as something from which they themselves would benefit (cf. *2 Cor* 8:10). This is all the more fitting during the Lenten season, when many groups take up collections to assist Churches and peoples in need. Yet I would also hope that, even in our daily encounters with those who beg for our assistance, we would see such requests as coming from God Himself. When we give alms, we share in God's providential care for each of His children. If through me God helps someone today, will He not tomorrow provide for my own needs? For no one is more generous than God.”

As with the other two main practices of Lent, the way in which we carry out our almsgiving is up to us. And the options are almost countless.

As a parish, St. Elizabeth of the Trinity features two Lenten almsgiving beneficiaries: Catholic Relief Services' Rice Bowl and our very own St. Vincent de Paul Society.

As you may know, CRS Rice Bowl benefits people in need throughout the world. In fact, 75% of what is collected goes overseas. Read the materials that came with the Rice Bowl to find out where and how your contributions are used or visit [crsricebowl.org](http://crsricebowl.org). (If you didn't get a Rice Bowl there is a supply on the table in the vestibule). The remaining 25% goes to our own St. Vincent de Paul Society. They use their resources to help people in need right here in our own neighborhood.

We offer other opportunities to share as well. You can donate non-perishable food items at any time to the Food Pantry, by putting your items in the box in the church vestibule or the shed on the west side of the entrance to the gym on Moody Ave. And then there are the donation boxes on the east side of the gym entrance for clothing and household items. Lent is a good time to purge your closets and pantries of what you no longer use and give it to someone who can. You may also make monetary donations to SVDP by placing them in the “Poor Box” slots in the vestibule.

Everything that we have comes from God. God has blessed us so that we may bless others. Lent affords us the opportunity to take stock of our blessings and decide how we can share them with those who have less. This sacrificial season gives us the extra push we may need to do some real good for those in need.

There are numerous charities that help those who are poor, or hungry, or homeless, or have any myriad of physical, mental, or spiritual needs. Put your mind into it. Put your heart into it. Put your wallet into it! Why not take the opportunity of Lent to do some real good for people in need?

Jim Madura