

# Tithing and Caring for the Poor

Father Bob's Homily – March 5, 2026

In today's homily, Father Bob reflects on the Gospel call to care for the poor and explains the biblical wisdom of tithing. His message reminds us that while none of us can solve poverty alone, each of us is called to give what we can with a generous heart.

I think we all understand the meaning of this gospel, that we should not be blind to the needs of the poor.

And we get that, but this is the kind of big gospel that often evokes a bit of scrupulosity or concern on the part of even the most generous Catholics who feel that they're not doing enough for the poor.

And I know this because they tell me.

Oftentimes they're elderly, they're on a fixed income, and on a yearly basis they get hundreds of solicitations from charities in the mail.

"Father, I feel so guilty because I just can't help everyone."

Well, when it comes to helping the poor, the Catholic Church, in her wisdom, gives us the biblical guidance of tithing, which is really pretty brilliant when you think about it.

It's giving 10% right off the top.

God gets the first 10 cents of every dollar.  
You get to keep 90 cents.

And this is how that wisdom works out, and it's been promulgated in our dioceses for a period of time.

An Example of Tithing

So let's say that you have \$30,000 of income.

10% of that is \$3,000 that you intend to give to God in the course of the year, to God and the poor.

So you divide that 10% up.

5% to Your Parish

5% of your \$30,000 income is \$1,500.

That goes to your parish church, fulfilling the precept of supporting your church, and in turn, your church helps to support the poor, for example, with our contribution to LCCM and other monetary gifts.

So by giving to your parish church, you're invariably helping the poor.

3% to the Diocese

Now you have 5% left over, so you take 3% of that, which is \$900, and that goes to the DAC, the Diocesan Annual Campaign, formerly known as the Lenten Appeal Campaign, which goes specifically to some services and ministries which help the poor.

2% to Charity of Your Choice

And now you've got 2% left over, which is \$600 of your \$3,000 you're giving to God and the poor.

Now you can give that \$600 to one charity or six charities.

You can put it in the poor box.

You get to do what you want with that 2% that's left over.

What This Accomplishes

And now notice that in every way you are doing the gospel mandate to help the poor, you are fulfilling the precept of the church, which is to help the church.

You're helping your diocese, and you are directly helping the charity or charities of your choice.

If Money Is Tight

And if you say, "Well, money's a real problem. I'm on a fixed income," well, you have to determine what you can give to God and to help the poor.

But if you can't offer financial support, maybe you can volunteer to help the poor.

And if you can't do that, there's always prayer.

And on top of prayer, there is fasting.

Fasting, prayer, and almsgiving are Lenten disciplines.

There is always some way to help the poor.

## Our Responsibility

And let us remember, Jesus said:

“The poor you will always have with you.”

So no one of us is required to solve the problem of poverty, but all of us are required to do something to help the poor.

And so we do what we can.

And as that verse before the gospel reminds us, that God loves a charitable giver, and He would love it for our hearts to be open and generous in helping the poor.

And if you need a way to sort that out in your life, think about our diocesan wisdom, the biblical wisdom of a tithe, and how that helps us do what God is asking us to do — and to do it with a generous heart.