

THE CHURCH AS A SYMBOL OF MERCY: THE HEARTH-HOLD METAPHOR

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Abstract

This essay is essentially based on boundless mercy of God as it affects human persons. By adopting the African image of hearth-hold, the church poses to spread her limitless mercy to every human person but particularly to targeted downtrodden persons. The church is effecting this mercy through the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. The essay is particularly choosing almsgiving as the virtue that portrays proper conduit through which the intended mercy reaches the consumer. In the process it will be discovered that this particular works of mercy demand more than a humanitarian basis to articulate possible instruments in bringing about our eternal salvation. That is why the church in this essay insists that an indispensable motive drawn from supernatural order is crucial to authenticate the validity of our works of mercy. Hence, the work asserts that the Church's love for the poor is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, by the poverty of Jesus and by his attention to the poor. Since this love concerns material poverty as well as the numerous forms of cultural and religious poverty, the church does whatever it takes at this moment in time to reach the desired audience. This is why, since her origin and in spite of the failing of many of her members, the Church continues the said various works for the relief, defence and liberation of human persons through almsgiving. It is against this backdrop that this essay articulates the mercy of God in this special year of Mercy.

Key Words: Mercy, Hearth-hold, Christianity, Community, Kingdom, *Kindom*, Family

(1). Preamble

The church as a symbol of mercy is conceived in Ekejuiba's metaphor of hearth-hold. She contends that the new metaphor understands the church as a 'hearth-hold' where all the children gather to receive their succour in times of need. When this new concept is grounded in African custom, it becomes the centrepiece of the community or family. In this case then, whereas the hearth-holder is the cynosure of the community or family the "householder is not necessarily the focal point of the well-being of that community." Consequently, the new church is envisioned to be a hearth, around which all should organize just as Africans organize around the hearths of women, some of whom might be 'biological mothers but not necessarily so'.¹ If this is accepted it follows that the image of the Church as the mother would be the same as the one mentioned in Gal. 4: 26.² If this is the case, it follows that the image resonates not only with 'the images of God as mother in some traditions and as provider and sustainer in Christianity.' But also corresponds with images of the compassionate Jesus, who cared so much for the physical and mental well-being of all he encountered. More so it tallies with the image of "the Holy Spirit, the advocate and comforter, many of whose attributes reflect the mothering on which African society depends"³

Moreover, the church is likened to the African hearth-hold situation where people stay together for mutual support and encouragement. A typical illustration is when Africans gather around the hearth of their women to draw food, drink, banter and encouragement, just like the fearful nascent church gathered together after the Ascension of the Lord in mutual support for one another. In so doing they developed a community of human persons who believed in

Jesus as their Messiah.⁴The present children of the church should gather around the church for their needs.⁵ In other words, the present children of the church must do what it takes to form a kind of mother-child relationship, a community whose 'food security' and whose faith in God is nourished by Jesus".⁶ While a Christian community that totally lives under God promotes the traditional terms such as 'kingdom,' 'reign,' 'household' as the image that guides them, at this point in time, within the African milieu it will be understood within the *kindom* which expresses the more meaningful term since it tells more of human relations than dominations.⁷

(2.) The Church as a Family within the House-hold of God

At this period, as the Church is concentrating her meditation on the Mercy of God as it reflects on human persons, we assume this image of the hearth-hold of God to redefine the family of God. In this regard, we borrow from Bronstein *et al*, who in their journal, 'Family Relations Journal,' explain that there is no particular definition of family.⁸ This is because there is no single correct definition of what a family is. Instead, there are multiple definitions in the literature, and these are necessarily related to the values of those who supply the definitions. That is why Burnett and Lewis adopted a pedifocal definition which includes as family members, all individuals who are involved in the nurturance and support of a child, regardless of where the child lives. Their inclusive definition, according to the Journal, suggests that families may include nonrelatives and may have flexible boundaries. Moreover, the former tendency to treat individuals in the study of family type as homogenous has changed since Hare and Richards studied lesbian mothers with children. The Journal maintains that the heterogeneity that is inevitably present in any large grouping of people clearly emerged. The study demonstrated that the experiences of these women may differ depending on how their children were conceived.⁹ Similarly, by studying gay stepfathers, Crosbie, Burnett and Helmbercht cast light on the varying experiences of both gay men and stepfathers and therefore it affected the definition. The foregoing is an effort to say that the concept of family is no more what it used to be - i.e. a socially constructed phenomenon with fixed norms, values, and behaviours that vary widely and are formed or created by several processes.¹⁰ Furthermore, Eshleman argues that viewing selected patterns of behaviour as fixed has led a number of scholars to question if the word family is even a meaningful concept, since it implies images of married couples, love, permanence, children, sexual exclusivity, home makers, legal unions, and intergenerational continuity. Such scholars have questioned whether these images are more than perceived idealism that is inconsistent with the realities of today's relationships: remarriages, dual careers, childless couples, one-parent households, same sex unions, gender inequalities, abusive partners and intergenerational disruptions.¹¹ Some writers, according to Eshleman, have asked if it is time yet to begin thinking about the family and families less in terms of traditional images and standards by which everything else is judged and more in terms of close relationships and sexually bonded primary relationships. The former term, he explains, suggests a traditional view held by a small segment of the population, while the later suggests a broader, comprehensive, more accurate portrayal of the reality of human close, primary, sexually bonded relationships.¹² Nevertheless, Eshleman accepts that it is difficult to find terms or concepts that differentiate family from nonfamily relationships and experiences. He quoted Ivan *et al* as suggesting the term sexually bonded as a characteristic. According to him, other scholars have suggested family realm as a term that differentiates familial types of human relationships from nonfamilial types, such as political, economic, medical, educational, military, and artistic relationships, among others. The family realm establishes ties across generations and includes

characteristics of permanence, a comprehensive concern for all members, a process orientation that grows out of care-giving, a unique and intense emotionally, an emphasis on qualitative purposes and processes, an altruistic orientation, and a nurturing form of governance.¹³

Consequently, all the preceding shades of family definitions fall within the adopted children of the church. Thus, the church as the hearth-hold presents all her children before the throne of Mercy, This is to purify them and adopt them as the children of God. Moreover, it is from this perspective then that the Church is theologically conceived as mother who provides, advocates and deeply cares for her children. This will bring the mystical church within the concept of African philosophy and religion where all human beings are construed as children of God. All these children of God belong to the household of God within which many hearth-holds exist. This means that all human beings belong to visible and invisible realms of God's world. It also follows not only that 'all of creation is cared for by God, the source of our being' but that 'the whole cosmos constitutes the *oikonomia* of God'¹⁴

(3.) The Articulation of Mercy within the Jubilee Year of Mercy

It is from this understanding therefore, that the church conceives the 'Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy,'—as a period for remission of sins and universal pardon of the children of God, focusing particularly on God's forgiveness and mercy. From this understanding mercy is further understood as a virtue influencing one's will to have compassion for other people, and at times the said mercy alleviates another people's adversity.¹⁵ According to St Thomas Aquinas, mercy is a spontaneous product of charity. But it is distinguishable from charity in the sense that it is a special virtue that draws out special sentiment of pity from the doer to the victim of mercy.¹⁶ So while we can say that charity is a general term that covers the work of mercy, mercy itself goes specifically for individuals specifically targeted by the performer. This is why when cataloguing mercy, the Scholastics consider it to be refer to the quality of justice mainly because, like justice, it controls relations between distinct persons. It is as they say *ad alterum*.¹⁷ Furthermore, as a virtue, mercy is always motivated by the misery discerned by people in another people, particularly in so far as this condition is deemed to be, in some sense at least, involuntary. Clearly the necessity which is to be assisted can be either of body or soul.¹⁸

Thus, the works of mercy are understood to be such charitable actions by which we assist our neighbours in their bodily and spiritual needs. In practice, they are known, in part, as spiritual works of mercy which translate to mean: instructing, advising, consoling and comforting as well as forgiving and bearing wrongs of the targeted neighbour patiently. When they are executed as corporal works of mercy they literally consist of 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.¹⁹

(4.) Almsgiving as an Expression of Strict Natural and Divine Law

From the divisions above it is clearly obvious that the works of mercy practically coincide with the various forms of almsgiving. Undoubtedly, this follows the classification of St. Thomas Aquinas. Deriving the proper meaning of almsgiving from Greek *eleemosyne*, *eleein* (to have mercy) and even Latin *miseratio*, with the same meaning, Thomas averred that almsgiving is an act of charity through the medium of mercy.²⁰ We have to note clearly, here that the doing of works of mercy is not merely a matter of exalted counsel; it is rather a strict precept imposed both by the natural law and the Divine law enjoining their performance.

When mercy is interpreted as essentially arising from the natural law it is as a result of the fact that the work of mercy is based upon the principle: do to others as you would have them do to you.

Moreover, focusing on the Divine command, we discover that it is strictly set forth by Christ under the pains of damnation in the event of anyone dares to fail to do it. For example, on the occasion of the Last Judgement in Matthew 25:41, Christ addressing those stationed on his left hand, saying: "Depart from me, you accursed, into eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me nothing to drink. I was a stranger, and you did not receive me as a guest; naked, and you did not clothe me; sick and in prison, and you did not visit me", etc. This is how corporal works of mercy is interpreted and how it is strictly binding. The spiritual works of mercy deal with a distress whose relief is even more imperative as well as more effective for the grand purpose of man's creation, but still the injunction above also extends to them. Moreover, Christ plainly refers to such works as fraternal correction such as, "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault when the two of you are alone. If he listens to you, you have regained your brother" (Matthew 18:15). Likewise, the forgiveness of injuries is another spiritual work of mercy. Christ clearly stated in Mat. 6:14 as follows: "For if you forgive others their sins, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." It is in the injunctions such as these and others like them that we mainly fulfil the spiritual works of mercy. Nonetheless, we have to bear in mind that the precept is an affirmative one, that is, it is of the sort which is always binding but not always operative, for lack of matter or occasion or fitting circumstances. It obliges, as the theologians would say, *semper sed non pro semper (season and out of season)*. In general, we assert that the determination of its actual obliging force is dependent on a given case. This also depends largely on the degree of distress to be assisted, and the capacity or condition of the one whose duty in the matter is in question.²¹

(5.) The Nature of Our Obligation Towards the Indigence.

The variety of actual conditions delineating the needy specifies the nature of indigence. For example, where the necessities of life are drastically lacking or where imminent danger imposes threats on vital interests, indigence is understood to be crucially dangerous. Furthermore, where the absence of aid leads to serious reverses in goods or fortune, indigence is said to be serious or pressing. But where the quest for the necessities of life involves considerable trouble, indigence is understood to be common or ordinary. Thus, the obligation of almsgiving extends to this triple indigence as mentioned above. Certainly, the Scriptures and indeed the Fathers of the Church speak extensively on the poor, the needy, and the indigent Christians without restricting the obligation of almsgiving to any particular types of indigence. The same view is generally upheld by nearly all theologians.²²

However, in order to concretely determine the nature of the obligation, it is essential to consider the character of temporalities in those who possess property. In this case, 'property' is translated to mean assets or worldly goods; hence, those who possess worldly goods are the ones to be considered in this regard. Accordingly, the property necessary to maintain vital interests is crucially necessary. Moreover, property without which vital interests are not jeopardized is considered unnecessary to that interest. Property that is required to maintain social prestige, i.e. to live in keeping with one's position in society, to educate offspring, to engage domestics, to entertain, etc., is considered equally indispensable from a social standpoint. Property without which social prestige is not endangered is reputed superfluous to that property. Consequently, there is never any obligation of using the necessities of life for

almsgiving because well-regulated charity ordinarily obliges everyone to prefer his own vital interests to those of his neighbour. The only exception occurs when the interests of society are identified with those of a needy member²³

Furthermore, the Catholic moralists teach that a neighbour, who is in extreme indigence, must be relieved by using such commodities that are superfluous to vital interests, even though such should be required for social advantages.²⁴ For charity demands that the vital interests of an indigent neighbour should supersede personal advantages of a much lower order.²⁵ It should be noted also that the transgression of this obligation involves a mortal sin. Nevertheless no one, however wealthy, is obliged to take extraordinary measures to assist a neighbour even in direful straits, e.g. a wealthy citizen is not bound to send a dying pauper to a more salubrious clime or to bear the expense of a difficult surgical operation for the betterment of a pauper.²⁶ Nor is a wealthy individual obliged to endanger his social standing to assist a neighbour in extreme need.²⁷ For charity does not bind anyone to employ extraordinary means in order to safeguard his own life.²⁸ However, alms must be given to a neighbour in a serious or pressing indigence by using such commodities as are superfluous in relation to present social advantages. Certainly, more likely in the more acute forms of such indigence those commodities which may in some measure tend to future social advantages must be taxed to succour this indigence.²⁹ The transgression of this obligation likewise involves a grievous sin because well-regulated charity obliges one to meet the serious needs of another when he can do so without serious personal disadvantage.³⁰

Moreover, in the ordinary troubles confronting the poor, alms must be given from such temporalities only as are superfluous to social requirements. This does not imply an obligation of answering every call, but a readiness to give alms according to the dictates of well-regulated charity.³¹ Theologians are divided into two schools regarding the character of this obligation. Those holding the view that the obligation is serious seem to espouse a cause in harmony with the teaching of the Scriptures and the authority of the Fathers.³² At all events, such affluent individuals as always fail to give alms or harshly repel mendicants indiscriminately are unquestionably guilty of grievous sin. Whosoever is actually obliged to relieve extreme or pressing indigence must give whatever is necessary to ameliorate existing conditions. While it is not an easy matter to determine what amount must be given as alms to those labouring under ordinary indigence, St. Alphonsus, whose view on this matter is shared by many modern moralists, holds that an outlay corresponding to two percent of temporalities superfluous to social prestige suffices to satisfy the obligation because were all concerned to adopt this method ordinary indigence could easily be remedied. At the same time it is not always practical to reduce problems depending so largely on moral appreciation to a mathematical basis.³³ Consequently, all the concerned persons who are either spontaneously contributing to public and private charities or are forced by the law of the land to pay such levied taxes to support the indigent, fulfil this obligation to some extent.³⁴ Physicians, attorneys and artisans are bound to render their services to the poor unless provision is made for them at public expense. The extent of services to be rendered and the character of the obligation binding thereunto depend on the kind of indigence and the inconvenience which such ministrations impose on physicians, attorneys or artisans.³⁵ Though the notion of almsgiving embodies the donation of commodities necessary to lighten human misery, moralists admit that it is sufficient to lend an object whose use alone serves to meet a neighbour's need.³⁶ Moreover, common sense repudiates almsgiving to those in need simply because they will not labour to escape such need.³⁷

(6.) The Distinctive Characteristics of Spiritually Fruitful Almsgiving

In addition to its innate characteristics, almsgiving should be vested with qualities tending to garner fruitfulness for giver and receiver. Almsgiving should be discreet, so as to reach deserving individuals or families.³⁸ It should be prompt, so as to warrant opportuneness.³⁹ It should be secret and humble,⁴⁰ cheerful,⁴¹ and abundant.⁴² The harvest of blessings to be reaped by almsgiving amply suffices to inspire noble-minded Christians "to make unto themselves friends of the Mammon of iniquity." First of all, almsgiving renders the donor like unto God Himself,⁴³ any more, it renders God Himself debtor to those giving alms.⁴⁴ Moreover, almsgiving adds special efficacy to prayer,⁴⁵ it tends to appease divine wrath,⁴⁶ liberates from sin and its punishment.⁴⁷ Thus, it paves the way to the gift of faith.⁴⁸ Daily experience proves that those lending a helping hand to stave off the miseries of the poor frequently prepare the way for the moral reformation of many whose temporal misery pales before their spiritual wretchedness. Finally, almsgiving tends to guard society against turbulent passions whose fury is often checked by almsgiving.⁴⁹

(7.) The Phases of Almsgiving

The various phases of almsgiving may be reduced to two chief classes: individual or transitory, and organized or permanent.

(7a.) Transitory Almsgiving

Such cases of indigence as frequently fall under the eye of sympathetic observers constitute the subject-matter of transitory almsgiving. Though charity organizations have multiplied their sphere of usefulness, special cases of indigence, more readily and effectually reached by individual attention, will always abound. Moreover, experience proves that the conduct and conversation of private benefactors frequently dispose their beneficiaries to reform their ways and lives and become useful members of the Church and State. For this reason, there will always be a wide field for individual almsgiving.⁵⁰

(7b.) Organized Almsgiving

At the same time, many worthy poor people are too sensitive to appeal to private persons, while many undeserving persons assume the role of professional mendicants to extort aid from those whose sympathy is easily moved, and whose purse strings are loosened to answer every call. Moreover, how much better to forestall than to relieve indigence? To render the poor self-reliant and self-supporting is the noblest achievement of well-regulated charity. Sound religious and secular education, means and opportunities for labour, more than almsgiving, will facilitate the realization of this lofty object. This is why various organizations have been established to alleviate the different forms of corporal misery.⁵¹ From empirical evidence, it is glaringly clear that the Church has since the time immemorial been and still the best friend of the poor people all over the world. Up to this moment, the credit of taking the initiative in promoting systematized effort for the welfare of the needy goes incontestably to the Church. So abundantly have her labours been blessed that her success has evoked the admiration of her sworn enemies.⁵²

Moreover, organized charity is furthered by the concerted efforts of persons in their private capacity or by the official proceeding of those whose position binds them to seek the temporal well-being of all classes in society. The various corners of the globe are dotted with institutions of innumerable kinds, reared and maintained by the generosity of private parties. Human misery in its various stages, from the cradle to the grave, finds therein a haven of consolation and rest, while the prayers of inmates, legion in number, call the blessing of Him who is the Father of the poor, upon the heads of those whose liberality proves that the charity of the brotherhood defies limitation.⁵³

Though admirable and far-reaching in its influence, privately organized charity is incapable of effectually coping with the various forms of misery. This is why civil governments shape their legislation to make provision for such subjects that failed in their efforts in the struggle for existence. Various institutions destined to provide for needy citizens of every class are conducted under State patronage.⁵⁴ Directors are appointed, attendants installed, visiting and inspection required, reports submitted, and appropriations annually made to meet the exigencies of such institutions. Encouragement and opportunity are not denied to those disposed to self-drive, self-respect, and self-support.⁵⁵

Noteworthy indeed are the associated charities inaugurated by the government to promote organized charity. Throughout cities, bureaus are established and officials deputed to examine the actual condition of mendicants, so as to discriminate between worthy and unworthy appeals. To this end friendly visiting is encouraged. Proselytizing is discountenanced, so much so that in many localities Catholics and non-Catholics join hands in the work of organized charity. Movements along these lines are to be found in England, Scotland, France, Italy, and Canada. Those best qualified to speak authoritatively in this matter are eloquent in their expression of the good feeling between Catholic and non-Catholic workers, and equally eloquent in summarizing the admirable results attained through this union of forces. These movements represent the culmination of noblest effort to concrete almsgiving in its fullness, so that givers themselves may share in affection, sympathy and thought with receivers, thereby animating almsgiving with a human, nay, more, a Divine element tending to ennoble the poor in healing their misery.⁵⁶

Similarly, the law imposing spiritual works of mercy is subject in individual instances to important reservations. For example, it may easily happen that an altogether special measure of tact and prudence, or, at any rate, some definite superiority is required for the discharge of the oftentimes difficult task of fraternal correction. Similarly to instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, and console the sorrowful is not always within the competency of everyone. But to bear wrongs patiently, to forgive offences willingly, and to pray for the living and the dead are things from which on due occasion no one may dispense himself/herself from on the pleas that he/she has not some special array of gifts required for their observance. This is to say that they are evidently within the reach of all.⁵⁷ Continuing his series of weekly address devoted to mercy, in this line of thought, Pope Francis reflected on Luke 6:36-38 during his September 21st general audience, saying: “We are reminded of our call to be merciful even as our heavenly Father is merciful (cf. Lk 6:36).” Then he adds, “When we look at salvation history, we see that God’s whole revelation is His untiring love for humanity which culminates in Jesus’ death on the Cross.” Continuing, the Pontiff exclaims: “So great a love can be expressed only by God!” Additionally, the Pope explains that Jesus’ call to humanity to be as merciful as the Father is, however, not a question of quantity (i.e. number of times). Instead it is a summons to be signs, channels and witnesses to his mercy. This is the church’s mission [on earth], to be God’s sacrament of mercy in every place and time. As Christians, therefore, God asks us to be his witnesses, first by opening our own hearts to his divine mercy, and then by sharing that mercy towards all people, especially those who suffer.⁵⁸

(8.) Conclusion

From the foregoing, we can certainly assert that the works of mercy, are charitable actions by which we assist our neighbours in their bodily and spiritual needs. In practice, they are known, in part, as spiritual works of mercy which translate to mean: instructing, advising, consoling and comforting as well as forgiving and bearing wrongs of the targeted neighbour

patiently. When they are executed as corporal works of mercy they literally consist of feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead as narrated earlier, demand more than a humanitarian basis if they are to serve as instruments in bringing about our eternal salvation. That is why the church in the aforementioned works of mercy insists that an indispensable motive drawn from supernatural order is crucial to authenticate the validity of our works of mercy. Hence, we assert that the Church's love for the poor is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, by the poverty of Jesus and by his attention to the poor. This love concerns material poverty and also the numerous forms of cultural and religious poverty. This is why, "since her origin and in spite of the failing of many of her members, the Church has not ceased to work for their relief, defence and liberation through numerous works of charity which remain indispensable always and everywhere".... In her teaching, the Church constantly returns to this relationship between charity and justice: Thus, when we attend to the needs of those in want, as enumerated above we give them what are theirs and not ours in actual fact. Thus, we can honestly submit conclusively that works of mercy are more than performing works of mercy; we are indeed paying a debt of justice.⁵⁹ In this way, we earnestly articulate the mercy of God within this year of Mercy.

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²Lumen Gentium, no. 6.

³Oduyoye, M. A. (2001). *Introducing African Women's Theology*. Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, p. 79.

⁴ Acts 1:12-14

⁵Ekejiuba, 1995, pp.47-57

⁶Oduyoye, 2001, p. 79

⁷Oduyoye, 2001, p. 80

⁸Bronstein, P. et al. (1993, July). Family Relations. National Council on Family Relations. Vol. 42, p. 66. As cited in Catholic Family and the Slothful Attitude towards the Sacraments. In *The Catholic Voyage*, 2016, vol. 12, pp.13-30

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¹⁰ For example, Margaret Crosbie-Burnett and Edith Lewis (1993) utilize a situational definition of family in working with families where alcohol is abused. The term pedifocal, defined as "all those involved in the nurturance and support of an identified child, regardless of household membership [where the child lives]" (p. 244), expands the definition of the family from being only family members to include those working with the family.

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¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴Oduyoye, 2001, p. 79

¹⁵Delany, J. (1911). Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved, July 5, 2016. Newadvent.org

¹⁶Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, II-II, QQ., xxx-xxxiii

¹⁷ Delany, J. 1911.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ The Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2447.

²⁰ Summa Theologica> Second Part of the Second Part > Question 32

²¹Delany, J. 1911, p.1

²² Ibid

²³Müller, *Theol. Moralis*, II, tr., i, sect. 30, 112.

²⁴St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, II-II, Q. xxxii, art. 6; St. AlphonsusLiguori, *Theol. Moralis*, III, no. 31.

²⁵Suarez, *De Charitate*, Disput. vii, sect. 4, no. 3.

²⁶Suarez, *Ibid.*, sect. 4, no. 4.

²⁷La Croix, *Theol. Moralis*, II, no. 201.

²⁸St. Alphonsus, *op. cit.*, III, no. 31.

²⁹Suarez, *Ibid.*, no. 5; De Conninck, *loc. cit.*, no. 125; Viva, in prop. xii, *damnatam ab Innoc. XI*, no. 8.

³⁰St. Alphonsus, *H. Ap. tr.*, iv, no. 19.

³¹Suarez, *Ibid.*, sect. 3, nos. 7, 10.

³²St. Alphonsus, *Ibid.*, III, no. 32; Bouquillon, *Institutiones Theol. MoralisSpecialis*, III, no. 488.

³³Lehmkuhl, *TheologiaMoralis (Specialis)*, II, ii, no. 609.

³⁴Lehmkuhl, 1898, no. 606.

³⁵Lehmkuhl, 1898, no. 609.

³⁶St. Alphonsus, *Ibid.*, III, no. 31; Bouquillon, *op. cit.*, no. 493.

³⁷St. Ambrose, *De OfficiisMinistorum*, xxx, no. 144.

³⁸2 Thessalonians 3:10; Sirach 12:4

³⁹ Proverbs 3:28

⁴⁰ Matthew 6:2

⁴¹ 2 Corinthians 9:7

⁴²Tobit 4:9; St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, II-II, Q. xxxii, art. 10.

⁴³ Luke 6:30, 36

⁴⁴Matthew 25:40 sq.

⁴⁵ Tobit 4:7

⁴⁶ Hebrews 13:16

⁴⁷ Sirach 29

⁴⁸ Acts 10:31

⁴⁹O'Neill, J.D. (1907). Alms and Almsgiving. In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved July 23, 2016 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01328f.htm>

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵²Encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, tr., 18.

⁵³O'Neill, J.D. (1907). Alms and Almsgiving

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ General Audience—2016.09.21, YouTube Vatican.

⁵⁹ Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 184.