

## Luke: 6:27–38

### From Catena Aurea:

27. But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,

28. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

29. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also.

30. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.

31. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

**AMBROSE.** Having proceeded in the enumeration of many heavenly actions, He not unwisely comes to this place last, that He might teach the people confirmed by the divine miracles to march onward in the footsteps of virtue beyond the path of the law. Lastly, among the three greatest, (hope, faith, and charity,) the greatest is charity, which is commanded in these words, Love your enemies.

**BASIL.** (in reg. brev. 176.) It is indeed the part of an enemy to injure and be treacherous. Every one then who does harm in any way to any one is called his enemy.

**CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA.** But this way of life was well adapted to the holy teachers who were about to preach throughout the earth the word of salvation, and if it had been their will to take vengeance upon their persecutors, had failed to call them to the knowledge of salvation.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. 18. in Matt.) But He says not, Do not hate, but love; nor did He merely command to love, but also to do good, as it follows, Do good to them which hate you.

**BASIL.** (ubi sup.) But because man consists of body and soul, to the soul indeed we shall do this good, by reproving and admonishing such men, and leading them by the hand to conversion; but to the body, by profiting them in the necessaries of life.

It follows, Bless them that curse you.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** For they who pierce their own souls deserve tears and weeping, not curses. For nothing is more hateful than a cursing heart, or more foul than a tongue which utters curses. O man, spit not forth the poison of asps, nor be turned into a beast. Thy mouth was given thee not to bite with, but to heal the wounds of others. But he commands us to count our enemies in the rank of our friends, not only in a general way, but as our particular friends for whom we are accustomed to pray; as it follows, Pray for them which persecute you. But many on the contrary falling down, and striking their faces upon the ground, and stretching forth their hands, pray God not for their sins, but against their enemies, which is nothing else but piercing their own selves. When thou prayest to Him that He would hear thee cursing thy enemies, who has forbidden thee to pray against thy enemies, how is it possible for thee to be heard, since thou art calling Him to hear thee by striking an enemy in the king's presence, not with the hand indeed, but with thy words. What art thou doing, O man? thou standest to obtain pardon of your sins, and thou fillest thy mouth with bitterness. It is a time of forgiveness, prayer, and mourning, not of rage.

**CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA.** Now the old law commanded us not to injure one another; or if we are first injured, not to extend our wrath beyond the measure of the injurer, but the fulfilling of the law is in Christ and in His commands. Hence it follows, And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. 18. in Matt.) For physicians also, when they are attacked by madmen, have then most compassion on them, and exert themselves to restore them. Have thou also a like consideration towards thy persecutors; for it is they who are under the greatest infirmity. And let us not cease until they have exhausted all their bitterness, they will then overpower thee with thanks, and God Himself will give thee a crown, because thou hast delivered thy brother from the worst disease.

**BASIL.** (in Esai. 1, 23. in App.) But we almost all of us offend against this command, and especially the powerful and rulers, not only if they have suffered insult, but if respect is not paid them, accounting all those their enemies who treat them with less consideration than they think they deserve. But it is a great dishonour in a prince to be ready to take revenge. For how shall he teach another, to return to no man evil for evil (Rom. 12:17.), if he is eager to retaliate on him who injures him.

**CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA.** But the Lord would moreover have us to be despisers of property. As it follows, And him that taketh away thy cloak, forbid not to take thy coat also. For this is the soul's virtue, which is altogether alien from feeling the pleasure of wealth. For it becomes him who is merciful even to forget

his misfortunes, that we may confer the same benefits upon our persecutors, whereby we assist our dear friends.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (ubi sup.) Now He said not, Bear humbly the rule of thy persecutor, but, Go on wisely, and prepare thyself to suffer what he desires thee to do; overcoming his insolence by thy great prudence, that he may depart with shame at thy excellent endurance.

But some one will say, How can this be? When thou hast seen God made man, and suffering so many things for thee, dost thou still ask and doubt how it is possible to pardon the iniquities of thy fellow servants? Who has suffered what thy God has, when He was bound, scourged, enduring to be spat upon, suffering death? Here it follows, But to every one who seeks, give.

**AUGUSTINE.** (de Serm. Dom. lib. 1. c. 20.) He says not, To him that seeketh give all things, but give what you justly and honestly can, that is, what as far as man can know or believe, neither hurts you, nor another: and if thou hast justly refused any one, the justice must be declared to him, (so as not to send him away empty,) sometimes thou wilt confer even a greater boon when thou hast corrected him who seeks what he ought not.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** Herein however we do not lightly err, when not only we give not to those who seek, but also blame them? Why (you say) does he not work, why is the idle man fed? Tell me, dost thou then possess by labour? but still if thou workest, dost thou work for this, that thou shouldest blame another? For a single loaf and coat dost thou call a man covetous? Thou givest nothing, make then no reproaches. Why dost thou neither take pity thyself, and dissuadest those who would? If we spend upon all indifferently, we shall always have compassion: for because Abraham entertains all, he also entertains angels. For if a man is a homicide and a robber, does he not, thinkest thou, deserve to have bread? Let us not then be severe censors of others, lest we too be strictly judged.

It follows, And of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. 10. in 1 Cor.) Every thing we have we receive from God. But when we speak of "mine and thine," they are only bare words. For if you assert a house to be yours, you have uttered an expression which wants the substance of reality. For both the air, the soil, and the moisture, are the Creator's. Thou again art he who has built the house; but although the use is thine, it is doubtful, not only because of death, but also on account of the issues of things. Thy soul is not thy own possession, and will be reckoned to thee in like manner as all thy goods. God wishes those things to be thine which are

entrusted to thee for thy brethren, and they will be thine if thou hast dispensed them for others. But if thou hast spent richly upon thyself what things are thine, they are now become another's. But through a wicked desire of wealth men strive together in a state contrary to Christ's words, And of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again.

**AUGUSTINE.** (de Ser. Dom. lib. 1. c. 19.) He says this of garments, houses, farms, beasts of burdens, and generally of all property. But a Christian ought not to possess a slave as he does a horse or money. If a slave is more honourably governed by thee than by him who desires to take him from thee, I know not whether any one would dare to say, that he ought to be despised, as a garment (ut vestimentum.)

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. 13. ad Pop. Ant.) Now we have a natural law implanted in us, by which we distinguish between what is virtue, and what is vice. Hence it follows, And as ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also to them. He does not say, Whatever ye would not that men should do unto you, do not ye. For since there are two ways which lead to virtue, namely, abstaining from evil, and doing good, he names one, signifying by it the other also. And if indeed He had said, That ye may be men, love the beasts, the command would be a difficult one. But if they are commanded to love men, which is a natural admonition, wherein lies the difficulty, since even the wolves and lions observe it, whom a natural relation compels to love one another. It is manifest then that Christ has ordained nothing surpassing our nature, but what He had long before implanted in our conscience, so that thy own will is the law to thee. And if thou wilt have good done unto thee, thou must do good to others; if thou wilt that another should shew mercy to thee, thou must shew mercy to thy neighbour.

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32. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

33. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

34. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

35. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

36. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. i. in Col.) The Lord had said that we must love our enemies, but that you might not think this an exaggerated expression, regarding it solely as spoken to alarm them, he adds the reason, saying, For if you love them which love you, what thank have ye? There are indeed several causes which produce love; but spiritual love exceeds them all. For nothing earthly engenders it, neither gain, nor kindness, nor nature, nor time, but it descends from heaven. But why wonder that it needs not kindness to excite it, when it is not even overcome of malice? A father indeed suffering wrong bursts the bands of love. A wife after a quarrel leaves her husband. A son, if he sees his father come to a great age, is troubled. But Paul went to those who stoned him to do them good. (Acts 14:17) Moses is stoned by the Jews, and prays for them. (Exod. 17:4) Let us then reverence spiritual love, for it is indissoluble. Reproving therefore those who were inclined to wax cold, he adds, For sinners even love those which love them. As if he said, Because I wish you to possess more than these, I do not advise you only to love your friends, but also your enemies. It is common to all to do good to those who do good to them. But he shews that he seeks something more than is the custom of sinners, who do good to their friends. Hence it follows, And if you do good to those who do good to you, what thank have ye?

**AMBROSE.** Now philosophy seems to divide justice into three parts; one towards God, which is called piety; another towards our parents, or the rest of mankind; a third to the dead, that the proper rites may be performed. But the Lord Jesus passing beyond the oracle of the law, and the heights of prophecy, extended the duties of piety to those also who have injured us, adding, But love your enemies.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. 58. in Gen.) Whereby thou wilt confer more upon thyself than him. For he is beloved by a fellow servant, but thou art made like unto God. But it is a mark of the greatest virtue when we embrace with kindness those who wish to do us harm. Hence it follows, And do good. For as water, when cast upon a lighted furnace, extinguishes it, so also reason joined with gentleness. But what water is to fire, such is lowliness and meekness to wrath; and as fire is not extinguished by fire, so neither is anger soothed by anger.

**GREGORY OF NYSSA.** (Orat. cont. usurar.) But man ought to shun that baneful anxiety with which he seeks from the poor man increase of his money and gold, exacting a profit of barren metals. Hence he adds, And lend, hoping for nothing again, &c. If a man should call the harsh calculation of interest, theft, or homicide, he will not err. For what is the difference, whether a man by digging under a wall become possessed of property, or possess it unlawfully by the compulsory rate of interest?

**BASIL.** (Hom. in Ps. 14.) Now this mode of avarice is rightly called in the Greek τόκος, from producing, because of the fruitfulness of the evil. Animals in course of time grow up and produce, but interest as soon as it is born begins to bring forth. Animals which bring forth most rapidly cease soonest from breeding, but the money of the avaricious goes on increasing with time. Animals when they transfer their bringing forth to their own young, themselves cease to breed, but the money of the covetous both produces an increase, and renews the capital. Touch not then the destructive monster. For what advantage that the poverty of to-day is escaped, if it falls upon us repeatedly, and is increased? Reflect then how canst thou restore thyself? Whence shall thy money be so multiplied as that it will partly relieve thy want, partly refresh thy capital, and besides bring forth interest? But thou sayest, How shall I get my living? I answer, work, serve, last of all, beg; any thing is more tolerable than borrowing upon interest. But thou sayest, what is that lending to which the hope of repayment is not attached? Consider the excellence of the words, and thou wilt admire the mercifulness of the author. When thou art about to give to a poor man from regard to divine charity, it is both a lending and a gift; a gift indeed, because no return is hoped for; lending, because of the beneficence of God, who restores it in its turn. Hence it follows, And great shall be your reward. Dost thou not wish the Almighty to be bound to restore to thee? Or, should He make some rich citizen thy security, dost thou accept him, but reject God standing as security for the poor?

**CHRYSOSTOM.** (Hom. 3. in. Gen.) Observe the wonderful nature of lending, one receives and another binds himself for his debts, giving a hundred fold at the present time, and in the future eternal life.

**AMBROSE.** How great the reward of mercy which is received into the privilege of divine adoption! For it follows, And ye shall be the sons of the Highest (Ps. 82:6.). Follow then mercy, that ye may obtain grace. Widely spread is the mercy of God; He pours His rain upon the unthankful, the fruitful earth refuses not its increase to the evil. Hence it follows, For he is kind to the unthankful, and to the evil.

**CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA.** Great then is the praise of mercy. For this virtue makes us like unto God, and imprints upon our souls certain signs as it were of a heavenly nature. Hence it follows, Be ye then merciful, as your heavenly Father also is merciful.

**ATHANASIUS.** (Orat. 3. cont. Arian.) That is to say, that we beholding His mercies, what good things we do should do them not with regard to men, but to Him, that we may obtain our rewards from God, not from men.

37. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

38. Give, and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

**AMBROSE.** The Lord added, that we must not readily judge others, lest when conscious of guilt thyself, thou shouldest be compelled to pass sentence upon another.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** Judge not thy superior, that is, thou a disciple must not judge thy master, nor a sinner the innocent. Thou must not blame them, but advise and correct with love; neither must we pass judgment in doubtful and indifferent matters, which bear no resemblance to sin, or which are not serious or forbidden.

**CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA.** He here expresses that worst inclination of our thoughts or hearts, which is the first beginning and origin of a proud disdain. For although it becomes men to look into themselves and walk after God, this they do not, but look into the things of others, and while they forget their own passions, behold the infirmities of some, and make them a subject of reproach.

**CHRYSOSTOM.** You will not easily find any one, whether a father of a family or an inhabitant of the cloister, free from this error. But these are the wiles of the tempter. For he who severely sifts the fault of others, will never obtain acquittal for his own. Hence it follows, And ye shall not be judged. For as the merciful and meek man dispels the rage of sinners, so the harsh and cruel adds to his own crimes.

**GREGORY OF NYSSA.** Be not then rash to judge harshly of your servants, lest ye suffer the like. For passing judgment calls down a heavier condemnation; as it follows, Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned. For he does not forbid judgment with pardon.

**CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA.** But that we shall receive more abundant recompense from God, who gives bountifully to those who love him, he explains as follows, Good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall they give into your bosom.

**THEOPHYLACT.** As if he says, As when you wish to measure meal without sparing, you press it down, shake it together, and let it pour over abundantly; so the Lord will give a large and overflowing measure into your bosom.

**AUGUSTINE.** (de Qu. Ev. l. ii. q. 8.) But he says, shall they give, (Mat. 10:42.) because through the merits of those to whom they have given even a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, shall they be thought worthy to receive a heavenly reward. It follows, For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

**BASIL.** (Hom. in Ps. 61.) For according to the same measure with which each one of you metes, that is, in doing good works or sinning, will he receive reward or punishment.

**THEOPHYLACT.** But some one will put the subtle question, “If the return is made overabundantly, how is it the same measure?” to which we answer, that He said not, “In just as great a measure shall it be measured to you again, but in the same measure.” For he who has shewn mercy, shall have mercy shewn unto him, and this is measuring again with the same measure; but our Lord spoke of the measure running over, because to such a one He will shew mercy a thousand times. So also in judging; for he that judges and afterwards is judged receives the same measure. But as far as he was judged the more severely that he judged one like unto himself, was the measure running over.

**CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA.** But the Apostle explains this when he says, He who sows sparingly, (that is, scantily, and with a niggardly hand,) shall also reap sparingly, (2 Cor. 6:9.) (that is, not abundantly,) and he who sows blessings, shall reap also blessings, that is, bountifully. But if a man has not, and performs not, he is not guilty. For a man is accepted in that which he has, not in that which he has not.

### **From Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture:**

#### **6:27–34 Eight Imperatives: Love Your Enemies**

##### **To Love Your Enemies is to Love the World.**

Augustine: We are also prohibited both from loving that world and, if we understand rightly, are commanded to love it. We are prohibited, of course, where it is said to us, “Do not love the world.” But we are commanded when it is said to us, “Love your enemies.” They are the world, which hates us. Therefore we are both prohibited from loving in it what the world itself loves, and we are commanded to love in it what the world hates, namely, the handiwork of God and the various comforts of his goodness. We are prohibited from loving the fault in it and are commanded to love its nature. The world loves the



fault in itself and hates its nature. So we rightly love and hate it, although it perversely loves and hates itself. Tractates on the Gospel of John 87.4.

### **The Virtue of Charity.**

Ambrose: Love is commanded when it is said, "Love your enemies," so that the saying which was uttered already before the church may be fulfilled: "Set in order love in me." For love is set in order when the precepts of love are formed. See how it began from the heights and cast the law underneath the backs of the gospel's blessing. The law commands the revenge of punishment. The gospel bestows love for hostility, benevolence for hatred, prayer for curses, help for the persecuted, patience for the hungry and grace of reward. How much more perfect the athlete who does not feel injury! Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 5.73.

### **On the Cross, Christ Prays for His Slanderers.**

Ambrose: What Christ said in word, he proved also by example. Indeed, when he was on the cross, he said in reference to his persecutors who were slandering him, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing," so that he might pray for his slanderers, although he could have forgiven them himself. The Prayer of Job and David 2.2.6.

### **To Turn the Other Cheek Requires Patience.**

Augustine: Temporal goods are to be despised in favor of eternal ones, as things on the left are to be despised in favor of those on the right. This has always been the aim of the holy martyrs. A final just vengeance is looked for, that is, the last supreme judgment, only when no chance of correction remains. But now we must be on our guard, more than anything else, not to lose patience in our eagerness to be justified, for patience is to be more highly prized than anything an enemy can take from us against our will. Letter 138.

### **The Merciful Person Suffers Injustice.**

Isaac of Nineveh: When a man overcomes justice by mercy, he is crowned, though not with crowns awarded under the law to the righteous, but with the crowns of the mature who are under the gospel. The ancient law also dictates that a man must give to the poor from his own means, and clothe the naked,

and love his neighbor as himself. It forbids injustice and lying. But the perfection of the gospel's dispensation commands the following: "Give to every man that asks of you, and of him that takes away your goods ask them not again." And further, a man must not merely with joy suffer injustice as regards his possessions and the rest of the external things that come upon him, but he must also lay down his life for his brother. This is the merciful man. Ascetical Homilies 4.

### **Old Testament Law Transformed.**

Ephrem the Syrian: "An eye for an eye" is the perfection of justice. "Whoever strikes you on the cheek, turn the other to him" is the consummation of grace. While both continually have their criteria, he proposed them to us through the two successive Testaments. The first Testament had the killing of animals for compensation, because justice did not permit that one should die in place of another. The second Testament was established through the blood of a man, who through his grace gave himself on behalf of all. One therefore was the beginning, and the other the completion. He in whom are both the end and the beginning is perfect. In the case of those who do not understand, the beginning and end are estranged one from the other. In the study of them, however, they are one.

Therefore this principle of a blow for a blow has indeed been transformed. If you strive for perfection, whoever strikes you, turn to him the other [cheek]. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 6.11b-12.

### **Stephen is an Example of Love for Enemies.**

Cyprian: How will you love your enemies and pray for your adversaries and persecutors? We see what happened in the case of Stephen. When he was being killed by the violence and stones of the Jews, he did not ask for vengeance but forgiveness for his murderers, saying: "O Lord, do not lay this sin against them." So it was most fitting that the first martyr for Christ who, in preceding by his glorious death the martyrs that were to come, was not only a preacher of the Lord's suffering but also an imitator of his most patient gentleness. The Good of Patience 16.

### **Lend Without Hope of Receiving.**

Basil the Great: "Lend to those from whom you do not hope to receive in return." "And what sort of a loan is this," he says, "to which there is no hope of a return attached?" Consider the force of the statement, and you will admire the kindness of the Lawmaker. When you have the intention of providing

for a poor person for the Lord's sake, it is at the same time both a gift and a loan. It is a gift because of the expectation of no repayment, but a loan because of the great gift of the Master who pays in his place and who, receiving trifling things through a poor person, will give great things in return for them. Homily on Psalm 14.

### **6:35–36 Imitate God**

#### **The Divine Image Seen in Human Mercy.**

Origen: The traces of the divine image are clearly recognized not through the likeness of the body, which undergoes corruption, but through the intelligence of the soul. We see the divine image in its righteousness, temperance, courage, wisdom, discipline, and through the entire chorus of virtues that are present essentially in God. These can be in people through effort and the imitation of God, as also the Lord points out in the Gospel when he says, "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" and "Be perfect, as your Father is perfect." On First Principles 4.10.

#### **Mercy an Attribute of God.**

Cyril of Alexandria: Closely neighboring, so to speak, upon the virtues which we have just mentioned is compassion, of which he next makes mention. For it is a most excelling thing, and very pleasing to God, and in the highest degree proper for pious souls. It may suffice for us to imprint upon our mind that compassion is an attribute of the divine nature. "Be merciful," he says, "as your heavenly Father is merciful." Commentary on Luke, Homily 29.

#### **Mercy on the Just and the Unjust.**

Justin Martyr: We pray for you that you might experience the mercy of Christ. He instructed us to pray for our enemies, when he said, "Be kind and merciful, even as your heavenly Father is merciful." We can observe that almighty God is kind and merciful, causing his sun to shine on the ungrateful and on the just and sending rain to both the holy and the evil. All of them, he has told us, he will judge. Dialogue with Trypho 96.

## **6:37–38 Four Imperatives: Do Not Judge**

### **The Practice of Mercy.**

Augustine: The practice of mercy is twofold: when vengeance is sacrificed and when compassion is shown. The Lord included both of these in his brief sentence: “Forgive, and you shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given to you.” This work has the effect of purifying the heart, so that, even under the limitations of this life, we are enabled with pure mind to see the immutable reality of God. There is something holding us back, which has to be loosed so that our sight may break through to the light. In connection with this the Lord said, “Give alms, and behold, all things are clean to you.” Therefore the next and sixth step is that cleansing of the heart. Letter 171a.

### **Do Not Judge, But Consider Your Own Misdoings.**

Cyril of Alexandria: He cuts away from our minds a very unmanageable passion, the commencement and begetter of pride. While it is people’s duty to examine themselves and to order their conduct according to God’s will, they leave this alone to busy themselves with the affairs of others. He that judges the brother, as the disciple of Christ says, speaks against the law and judges the law. The lawgiver and judge are One. The judge of the sinning soul must be higher than that soul. Since you are not, the sinner will object to you as judge. Why judge your neighbor? But if you venture to condemn him, having no authority to do it, it is yourself rather that will be condemned, because the law does not permit you to judge others.

Whoever therefore is guided by good sense, does not look at the sins of others, does not busy himself about the faults of his neighbor, but closely reviews his own misdoings. Such was the blessed psalmist, falling down before God and saying on account of his own offenses, “If you, Lord, closely regard iniquities, who can endure?” Once again, putting forward the infirmity of human nature as an excuse, he prays for a reasonable pardon, saying, “Remember that we are dirt.” Commentary on Luke, Homily 29.

### **Judge from Justice, Forgive from Grace.**

Ephrem the Syrian: Do not judge, that is, unjustly, so that you may not be judged, with regard to injustice. With the judgment that you judge shall you be judged. This is like the phrase “Forgive, and it will be forgiven you.” For once someone has judged in accordance with justice, he should forgive in accordance with grace, so that when he himself is judged in accordance with justice, he may be worthy of forgiveness

through grace. Alternatively, it was on account of the judges, those who seek vengeance for themselves, that he said, "Do not condemn." That is, do not seek vengeance for yourselves. Or, do not judge, from appearances and opinion and then condemn, but admonish and advise. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 6.18b.

### **Two Kinds of Almsgiving: Giving and Forgiving.**

Augustine: The Christian soul understands how far removed he should be from theft of another's goods when he realizes that failure to share his surplus with the needy is like to theft. The Lord says, "Give, and it shall be given to you. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven." Let us graciously and fervently perform these two types of almsgiving, which is, giving and forgiving, for we in turn pray the Lord to give us good things and not to repay our evil deeds. Sermon 206.2.

### **Two Wings of Prayer.**

Augustine: "Forgive, and you will be forgiven." "Give, and it will be given you." These are the two wings of prayer, on which it flies to God. Pardon the offender what has been committed, and give to the person in need. Sermon 205.3.

### **Mercy, Charity and Forgiveness.**

Augustine: So there is hope in God's mercy, if our misery is not so barren as to yield no work of mercy. What do you want from the Lord? Mercy. Give, and it shall be given to you. What do you want from the Lord? Pardon. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Sermon 179a.1.

### **Christians are the Granaries of the Poor.**

Augustine: You give alms. You receive alms. You pardon. You are pardoned. You are generous. You are treated generously. Listen to God saying, "Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and things will be given to you."

Keep the poor in mind. I say this to all of you. Give alms, my brothers and sisters, and you won't lose what you give. Trust God. I'm not only telling you you won't lose what you do for the poor, but I'm telling you plainly, this is all that you won't lose.... Come now, let's see if you can cheer the poor up today. You be

their granaries, so that God may give to you what you can give to them, and so that he may forgive whatever sins you have committed. Sermon 376a.3.

### **The Paradox of God's Bounty.**

Cyril of Alexandria: He has given us full assurance that God, who gives all things abundantly to those who love him, shall reward us with bountiful hand. He said, "Good measure, and squeezed down, and running over shall they give into your bosom." He added this too, "For with what measure you give, it shall be measured to you." There is, however, an apparent incompatibility between the two declarations. If we are to receive good measure, and squeezed down, and running over, how shall we be paid back the same measure we give? For this implies an equal reward, and not one of far-surpassing abundance. Commentary on Luke, Homily 29.