

## HE WHO GIVES TO THE POOR LOANS TO GOD

—*from the sermons of St. John Chrysostom*—

When a queen enters the royal palace, none of the guards dare stop her. No one examines her. No one questions her, “who are you? Where are you going?” On the contrary, all the members of the royal family welcome her joyfully. This is also how almsgiving enters Heaven, where she is received and led before the regal throne of God. God exceedingly loves almsgiving, and this is why she stands right next to Him. This is why the Holy Scriptures state, “**The Queen has stood at your right side**” (Ps. 44:10). God’s first daughter is almsgiving. Almsgiving is she who persuaded God to become man, in order to save man. On account of this, no matter what favor she asks of God on behalf of them who give alms, her request is immediately fulfilled. This is how much honor and influence almsgiving has before God. She not only erases the sins of people who give alms but even repels death.

How can we be assured that almsgiving can even deliver us from death? You will tell me that people die continuously, and that no one is able to evade death. Do not doubt! Rather, listen and learn how almsgiving possesses the power to overcome even death. In Joppa, there was a young lady named Tabitha who would give alms to everyone. Her only ceaseless concern was how to take care of the needy. She would clothe and feed widows and orphans, and assist the poor in every possible manner. At some point this young lady became critically ill and passed away. How did all the widows and poor people who had received charity from her react at that time? They did not permit her to be buried, but immediately sent messengers entreating the Apostle Peter to come to Joppa. As the Apostle neared the home wherein Tabitha lay, all the widows came out to greet him, weeping and displaying the various gifts Tabitha had given to them when she was alive. Some people were holding clothing, others were showing scarves, and others presenting shoes. When the Apostle Peter saw such a plethora of alms, and observed the tears of the poor Christians and orphans, he kneeled and prayed on behalf of the widows and in the end commanded: “**Tabitha, arise!**” At once, she opened her eyes, and, when she saw the Apostle Peter, she sat up. Peter then proceeded to hold her by the hand and raise her up. In following, he called the widows and everyone present and handed her to them alive (**Acts 9:36-43**). Do you see how beneficial and powerful almsgiving is?