



## From the Deacon's Desk

What are you doing for Lent? it's a question we hear a lot. In his Lenten messages, Pope Francis provides a list of actions that include both "giving up something" and "doing something."

[1] **Get rid of addiction to evil.** We all need to improve, to change for the better. Lent helps us, and thus we leave behind old habits and the lazy addiction to the evil that deceives and ensnares us."

[2] **Do something that hurts.** We would do well to ask ourselves what we can give up to help and enrich others by our poverty. Let us not forget that real poverty hurts: no self-denial is real without this dimension of penance.

[3] **Don't remain indifferent.** Each year during Lent we need to hear once more the voice of the prophets who cry out and trouble our conscience.

[4] **Pray: Make our heart like yours.** We will receive a heart which is firm and merciful, attentive and generous, a heart which is not closed, indifferent or prey to the globalization of indifference."

[5] **Take part in the sacraments.** Lent is a favorable time for letting Christ serve us so that we, in turn, may become more like him. This happens whenever we hear the word of God and receive the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.

[6] **Pray.** Lent is a time of prayer, of more intense prayer, more prolonged, more assiduous, more able to take on the needs of the brethren; intercessory prayer, to intercede before God for the many situations of poverty and suffering.

[7] **Fasting.** We must be careful not to practice a formal fast, or one which in truth 'satisfies' us because it makes us feel good about ourselves. Fasting makes sense if it questions our security, and if it also leads to some benefit for others.

[8] **Almsgiving.** Gratuitousness is often not part of daily life where everything is bought and sold; calculated and measured. Almsgiving helps us to experience giving freely, which leads to freedom from the obsession of possessing, from the fear of losing what we have, from the sadness of one who does not wish to share his wealth with others.

What are you doing for Lent?

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