



# Our Parish Community

**March 6, 2022**  
*First Sunday of Lent (C)*  
Dt 26:4-10  
Rom 10:8-13  
Lk 4:1-13



## It's All Gift

**T**here is one word that could almost be erased from our religious vocabulary. That word is *earn*. So many of us take on a Lenten program of penance to earn God's forgiveness. Or we engage in prayer to earn indulgences that will lessen our time in purgatory. Somewhere along the line we missed the class in which the primacy of God's free gift of grace was taught. Consequently, we still might use language that emphasizes our own hard-won merit apart from God rather than freely given love as the basis of all that follows. Today's first reading refutes such thinking.

The passage from Deuteronomy contains an important creedal statement, describing the heart of ancient Israel's faith. The people were instructed by Moses to commemorate the event of their founding as the special people of God. The creedal statement was probably recited during that commemoration. The statement itself describes how God called their

ancestor; from that ancestor called forth a great people, delivered those people out of slavery, and then settled them in a land that became their own. Every event was God's work. The people did nothing to deserve it. It was all gift. Why did God choose these people, make them great, free them, settle them, and provide them with abundant harvests? Because they were good? No! Because God is good. They earned nothing, deserved nothing. It was all gift.

Why is it so difficult for us to realize that we really do not give gifts to God? It's just the opposite. When it comes to God's grace, it's all gift.

*Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA*

### FOR Reflection

- ★ Spend a moment thinking about all the free gifts God has given you.
- ★ Let your Lenten practice be graciousness to others.

# Dear Padre,

**My fourteen-year-old daughter is very thin. She says giving up food during Lent is proof that she honors God. How can I convince her God doesn't want her to starve herself? Is there anything else she can do for Lent?**

**A**ccording to the *Code of Canon Law*, at age fourteen your daughter isn't required to fast (eating only one full meal a day, no snacks); the Church requires this only of people age eighteen through fifty-nine because people outside those age groups need more than one full meal a day to maintain good health (1252).

She is, however, old enough to abstain from meat, as required of Catholics age fourteen and older. But she should replace that meat with another source of protein like cheese or fish.

Please tell your daughter that the Lenten fast is about preparing our hearts to celebrate the joy of Easter. Fasting and abstinence are not about starving or losing weight. They're about making room for God and deepening our relationship with Christ.

And the word *abstain* isn't limited to matters involving food. Your daughter can abstain from watching television, using her mobile phone except in emergencies, or using

the computer for anything other than schoolwork. Prayer and almsgiving (donating money or time to charity) also are part of our Lenten practice. Anyone can safely do these things to achieve the same result: growing closer to God in preparation for Easter.

*Fr. Patrick Keyes, CSSR / Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org*

### Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to [DearPadre.org](http://DearPadre.org) to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.

### A WORD FROM Pope Francis

*Fasting makes us share the situation of many people who face the torment of hunger and makes us more attentive to others; almsgiving is a blessed opportunity to collaborate with God's providence for the benefit of his children. And I invite you to make almsgiving a way of life and to persevere in concrete help to those in need.*

ADDRESS TO PRO PETRI SEDE ASSOCIATION, FEBRUARY 16, 2018



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