

On the internet I came across an article about “**Changing the Way We look at Lent**” by Sr. Louise Levesque, OP. Since it was copyrighted, I contacted Sister for permission to use some of her ideas. She was pleased that I wanted to do so and gave me permission to use as much of it as I wanted. So, I am happy to be able to share with you some of her thoughts.



For many of us the **emphasis** during Lent has been on **giving up** something very **tangible**, which is something good, but have you ever thought about **focusing** on ways to **deepen your relationship with God during Lent**? The problem is that when we **give up** something, this often becomes a **conversation topic** rather than **deepening our friendship with God**. So, this year, how about looking at some ways to grow in **holiness** and **deepen your relationship with God and others**.

Traditionally, the Lenten focus has always been on: **Fasting, Almsgiving, and Prayer**. Let's look at some different ways to do this.

FASTING

Instead of fasting from sweets or other things, we might **fast** from **complaining, criticizing, a self-righteous attitude, from the need to be right, or the need to be in control**. And, the list continues: what about **negativity, anger, resentment, indifference, pettiness, worry, gossip, self-righteousness, procrastination, etc.**? (I hesitated listing all these things because I found the list overwhelming!)

They are all **un-pretty parts** of ourselves. And, as we focus on reforming them, we also draw **closer** to the **spirit of God within us**.

GOOD DEEDS

Instead of **giving something up**, do **good works** during Lent: **donating** money to a favorite nonprofit organization, **volunteering** or donating to a local soup kitchen, down-sizing your closet and donating extra clothing, or researching **volunteer jobs** to help within your community,

PRAY MORE

One way of deepening our relationship with God is to ask Him what He wants of us. Then listen and **act**. Remember, Lent is really **more** than personal awareness, it's about **action**.

Another suggestion: focus on **random acts of kindness** throughout the forty days in order to spread the **joy, peace, and hope** of Christ to those around you. In doing so you also become more conscious of their **needs** and of your own **inclinations**. Be alert for opportunities to **quietly** reach out to others.

I invite you to **pray over** these **possibilities** and choose **one or two** that you feel would **best** help you grow in your **relationship with God and others** this Lent.

Holy Lent!

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 2. “Remember, you are dust...” or “Repent and believe in the Gospel.”