



**Digital Commons@**

Loyola Marymount University  
LMU Loyola Law School

---

Spiritual Essays

Center for Ignatian Spirituality

---

2008

## Giving Up?

Fr. Randy Roche

*Loyola Marymount University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/spiritualessays>



Part of the [Catholic Studies Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

---

### Repository Citation

Roche, Fr. Randy, "Giving Up?" (2008). *Spiritual Essays*. 37.  
<https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/spiritualessays/37>

This Essay is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for Ignatian Spirituality at Digital Commons @ Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. It has been accepted for inclusion in Spiritual Essays by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@lmu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@lmu.edu).

## Giving Up?

“What are you giving up for Lent?” – A question that, in times past, children frequently asked of one another in Catholic schools. We might now ask ourselves a different question: “What motives do we have for making changes to some of our habits?” Why would any of us choose to give up a TV program, or take a shorter amount of time in the shower, or engage more consciously in some form of recycling? Or, why might some of us pray for politicians, contribute money to a non-profit service organization, or express gratitude to people and to God more frequently than we have done previously?

One of us makes little adjustments to his or her way of doing things so as to use less water. Another person helps at a home for abused children, or teens at risk, or elderly shut-ins. One person visits the sick as a member of a church organization. Someone else volunteers on the board of an organization that helps homeless persons find jobs. Each of us has good reasons for acting as we do, but we might find it difficult to put our motivation into words. We might be shy about saying that love is the ultimate reason for our decisions, but it is probably true.

We are under no obligation to reveal our motives to anyone, but we will know when our choices and actions are consonant with our values and our hearts. We are willing to prioritize time and energy, and use our resources of mind, money, and talent on behalf of the persons we choose to love: family and friends, coworkers and those known to us, strangers, and, God.

We give up doing one thing so that we can do another. If we take care of a child in need, or spend time as a care-giver for an elderly or sick person, our attention is focused on the person, and what we can do to help, not on what we are giving up. Our concern is centered on what we want to do, not the things we omit. Love is choosing what we most deeply prefer, since we cannot give ourselves wholly to two different things at the same time.

What did Jesus give up for Lent? His priority was, and is, us. He gave his life for us, from the motive of love. Obligation was never a factor. We were then, and are now, the objects of Jesus' love, not any other human or divine motivation that we can imagine. He loved us “to the cross.” An appropriate response for us is to love those whom Jesus loves, even though we will surely leave aside some of life's pleasures when we freely choose to follow the deeper desires of our hearts. We

do not go looking for hardship any more than Jesus did. But if we love our neighbor as ourselves we will give up some negative or selfish behavior for the sake of helping others. And we will love ourselves well enough to take time for prayer, for exercise, and for laughter, giving up some habitual time-wasters that do nothing for us.

Lent, as with all of life, is for loving, that is, giving, "up."