

What more do you want of me during Lent?

Living with young children often feels like a perpetual Lent. We parents give up creature comforts, privacy, personal time, the food off our plates (and sometimes clothes off our backs), money, hobbies, even sleep for the good of someone else. So, when Lent comes around each year, I sometimes find myself thinking, "What else do you want from me, Lord?"

However, this is probably the wrong way to look at Lenten sacrifice. We fast, pray and give alms not for the good of ourselves or our families, but in service to God and the human family. The spirit with which we approach the sacrifice matters.

Therefore, in our family, we try to make a series of commitments together each year: to cull through our toy and clothes closets, to collect pocket change and donate it to a worthy charity at the end of the season, to pray together nightly, to go to parish prayer services and community events, to give up certain sweets in our house and, yes, to abstain from eating meat on Fridays. In keeping certain practices as a family, we can support one another and work together to see the season through. And when we are working together, the sacrifices are not about personal suffering, but are instead transformed into a joyful work that we undertake together.

Our family practices have changed the way I look at Lent. Instead of focusing on myself and what I am doing, I try to think about how I can better serve God and my neighbor during this season of preparation. The Jesuits call this *magis* – that is, doing more for God – and for their ranks it is a reminder to keep a constant restlessness in service, not being satisfied by what has been done. But the word *magis* is simply Latin for "more." We are loved by a God who loves without

limit. What more can we do to love him in the same unbounded way this Lent?