

God, let's talk about Lent

God, it's almost Lent again and I need to think about how I need to spice up my dull life. It's so easy to get in a rut. It's like an old comfortable pair of bedroom slippers. No matter how scuffed, worn and out of shape they are, I still hate to part with them. They are so familiar and so comfortable on my feet. I hate to part with them and have to break in a new pair.

I often approach Lent with the same attitude. It's like I know I need to embrace a new pair of bedroom slippers and I hate to let go of the old ones because I know them so well and they fit so well and they are so comfortable.

I know that, sooner or later, I have to get rid of the old slippers and break in the new ones but it is going to be hard to break old habits. I was thinking God, that, isn't that what Lent is all about – breaking old habits and creating some new, good ones.

If I can remember, last Lent, I had all kinds of plans but somehow I failed miserably in the execution. I started off with great gusto and was really excited but then, I seemed to get discouraged and just backslid.

God, I think that Lent was much easier when I was a kid. All kids gave up candy then. It wasn't easy but knowing that all your friends were giving up the same thing helped. Back then, we could keep our stash of candy until Sunday and then we could indulge as much as we liked. You see, God, back then, somehow, we figured out that Sundays were not part of Lent. Somehow, we were under the impression that Lent was to be forty days and doing the math by counting the days between Ash Wednesday and Holy Thursday, there were more than forty days. So, we concluded that if we took out the Sundays, then it would make it closer to forty days. Lent wasn't so bad back then when we all had an "out" with free Sundays.

Now that I am an adult, I find it hard to discover any loopholes or excuses. Now, I realize that Lent is not really about giving up things but about taking on new responsibilities. And one of the hardest things about taking on new responsibilities involves being responsible for myself, my actions, my habits, my need for growth as well as being open to the many ways you want to stretch me. And you know, God, how unpleasant it is for me to be stretched.

I know that Lent is not so much about giving up but about being more willing to look at the dark places in my life that need your touch, your healing and most of all to allow you to enter and flood me with your light, love, peace and wisdom.

God, I know that the hardest journey is the journey inside because I am not sure what I will find when I journey within and I am not sure if I will like it or if I have the willingness and courage to change it. It is much easier to try and change someone else than to change myself.

God, by going within, I am forced to ask some deeper questions I would rather shy away from. I am forced to ask myself questions like, "What is the meaning of life?" "Why am I here?" "What are my gifts?" "Am I the kind of person you want me to be?" "What difference am I making in people's lives?" "Have I found my niche in life yet?" "Am I the best I can be?"

Gosh, God, these are some soul searching questions. They sure are a lot different than giving up candy or giving up things I like such as soft drinks. I just hope I am ready to address all these questions and that you will help me along the way. I know that, in order to do that, I will need to spend lots more time in prayer and reflection. I know that will not be easy because it is so easy to be busy and that distracts me from the real soul searching I need to do.

Now I know that I will have to pitch that old pair of slippers that were so comfortable because they remind me that I need to forgo my comfort zone and try and break-in the new pair of slippers, my new self that is waiting to be discovered. God, it seems I will be seeing more of you over the next forty plus days.