

# Letting Love in During Lent

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My love goes out to all of you this holy season of Lent. Now that I am an old man, I see more clearly that love is the only thing that really matters in life. Things you have acquired, like wealth or power or fame, are not really important. All that matters is how much of God's love you've shared with those in need.

Every Lent we celebrate God's gifts, especially the gift of eternal life. We aspire to attain heaven by striving for greater perfection. As we approach the joy of Easter, we are facing the challenge of using our gifts well.

In his loving wisdom, God has given each of us two great gifts: a life to live and a love to share. St. Paul wrote: "But the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13). To have a good Lent, we all need to focus on the desires of the heart. Do you have the right attitude toward others?

Think about your gifts and talents. How are you using them? Focus on the ways your gifts can bring a smile to a child's face or a warm feeling to an elderly person in need of kindness.

Your talent for helping others should not become mere good intentions. Take action as best as you can. What are you good at? We all have talents that aren't used as well as they should. If there is something you enjoy doing, do it soon for someone who needs your special touch.

There is still time to think of ways to share your talents with the people you love. Bake a cake, sing a song or just be there for someone who needs a little cheer.

Since God delights in loving us, we need to take delight in loving others. We do this best by sharing our gifts with them. Spread your love around. You can break out and bring joy to those who have no claim on your kindness.

God's joy is contagious. Since you know that you are a carrier of divine love, why not figure out ways to help those near you? Think of ways to bring joy especially to those who may live in fear.

Fear is the enemy of joy. The reason God said to us in Isaiah 41:10, "Do not fear: I am with you; do not be anxious: I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you" is that he wanted us to enjoy our lives. To begin doing that, we have to rid ourselves of needless worry. Immediately put on the will to bear discomfort and smile.

Some are better than others at shedding fear. I know this because I was born a worrier. I was born in 1931. My mother carried me in her womb for nine months during the Great Depression and my father was out of work. Her fears seeped into my genes.

Today I am free of all that because I made a concerted effort to trust God more and more. I no longer let anxiety get a foothold in my psyche. If fear does strike, I immediately think of it as a gift and a test to see how quickly I can show the Lord that I trust him implicitly. His loving protection covers us in all circumstances.