

Giving Up Laundry for Lent

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This morning I was heading down the hall with a huge pile of laundry in my arms when Charlene stopped me. “Please, please don't do any more laundry. We haven't put away all the other clean clothes yet.” Sure enough, all around the apartment were lovely piles of clean and formerly clean clothes.

Laundry's fun, for sure. I love doing laundry. Putting clothes away? Not so much. Laundry is like so many other things. We think we're accomplishing something; we think we're making progress. And the more we do, the more piles surround us.

I'm thinking about giving up laundry for Lent. A symbolic act, recognizing that so many things I do are less than ultimately significant. A small thing, leaving the laundry in the wings: hoping that the bigger things can then move to center stage.

Lent is the spiritual season when we journey with Jesus through his time of prayer, fasting and temptation in the wilderness. Jesus was fighting for his spiritual life. He didn't eat. He didn't drink. You know he didn't take time to do the laundry. You know he didn't lose sleep over having to wear mismatched socks. How bad could it be for us to spend Lent in a wilderness of unclean clothes and wrinkled shirts?

I'm not suggesting that everyone needs to give up doing laundry. We're a clothing-challenged congregation as it is. But aren't there things you obsess about that really aren't that important? Isn't there something you might give up in order to focus on the really important stuff?

You might find yourself with time to care about what really matters. After all, you're fighting for your spiritual life.