

A Fast that Transforms

Greetings as we begin this holy season!

As parents, we are eager to share the faith practices we learned as children, such as our personal experiences of fast and abstinence during Lent. I remember childhood attempts at giving up candy, and of my mother's tuna macaroni casseroles reliably appearing each Friday. Perhaps your memories are similar!

But as I reflect on that, there were just two little problems: I rarely was given candy (the valentine of chocolates from my father was long gone) and I just loved macaroni! So I'm not so sure what this fast and abstinence taught me! But what would be better? Is there something with richer meaning that we can bring to our children?

As the baptized followers of Jesus, we are called to make not just any sort of sacrifice but meaningful, even transformative, sacrifice for others. What might that look like? Perhaps as a family we can give up a particular type of spending (the Friday pizza) and donate that money to



an organization we choose together—demonstrating that we are willing to work for systemic change. Maybe we can buy, not a favorite brand, but a store brand, making it possible to take some of our weekly grocery money and give canned goods to our parish food drive—demonstrating that we recognize that near-term solutions are also critical.

The hardest kinds of fast and abstinence might not even involve our financial resources. Maybe we can abstain from bickering. Fast from the unkind word, or the quick answer, or the

**Fast from the unkind word,
or the quick answer, or the
hurtful look.**

hurtful look. Or as parents, the harsh judgment or the automatic reaction. However we help our children more meaningfully enter into the experience of sacrifice, may we all come into a deeper love for the one who sacrificed all for us—our brother Jesus Christ.