



## Living a Eucharistic Life during Lent Sr. Mary Catherine Kasuboski, TOR

What do we do when we want to give someone a gift, but have no money? We usually have to get creative, and often the result is a gift that includes something of ourselves.

For many years, I have served our community as the General Treasurer, which means I manage the material resources for the whole community. It is a role that involves a massive amount of responsibility, leaving me very little time to devote to our communal ministries. However, I feel within me a deep hunger to do ministry, because I didn't enter religious life to take care of the finances.

### **A Hidden Opportunity**

Recently, after a couple of ministry events came up for me and subsequently fell through, I felt rather disappointed. As I took my still hungry heart to the Lord, I felt led to consider my present circumstances replete with ministry opportunities, not to people outside the community, but to my own sisters with whom I live.

At first, I didn't find this very exciting, but when I began to accept it more deeply, I realized the Lord was offering me opportunities to live a Eucharistic life at every moment of every day—offering a gift of myself in little, often hidden ways that might never be considered “ministries” by anyone else. If a sister comes to my office needing a check to purchase something and I give her a loving smile with it, I have given a gift of myself.

When we are at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we witness Jesus offering himself to the Father as he did on the Cross, and we are called to participate in that by offering ourselves (and all aspects of our lives) with Jesus to the Father. When we leave Mass, we are called to extend that self-offering and live a Eucharistic life by offering ourselves to one another in love.

### **Holiness through “Little Gifts of Self”**

This is a path to holiness that is open to every person. Traditionally, Lent calls us to focus on prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. “Sacrifices,” “penances,” and “death-to-self” are common words we hear. These can have a negative connotation for us and even subtly cause us to focus on our own efforts. Maybe what we really need to focus on are little gifts of self—doing positive acts that help us love God, others, and even ourselves better.

Here are a few ideas that can be springboards for your own creativity:

- Give a word of encouragement and/or affirmation to someone.
- Be creative and intentional about asking a friend (or family member) how he/she is doing today, and be prepared to listen to the response.
- Take 5 minutes to look out the window, find some beauty, thank God for it, and ask for the grace to see beauty in the people you encounter today.
- Get to Mass 5 minutes earlier than you usually do and focus your mind on God.
- Fast from social media platforms for 15 minutes and use that time to pray instead.
- When people interrupt your work or conversations, receive them with openness and gratitude for the opportunity to serve them.
- When you hear gossip or are tempted to it yourself, say something positive and uplifting instead.

Then, when you go to Mass, try to remember to offer the little things you've done, what you've failed to do, and your very self to Jesus in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and allow all these little offerings of love to bind your heart more closely to him. Jesus delights to see us find creative ways of giving gifts of ourselves to one another, so let us ask him to help us live a more Eucharistic life today.

*Sr. Mary Catherine is a member of the Franciscan Sisters Third Order Regular of Penance of the Sorrowful Mother. She is a spiritual director and serves the universal Church in Toronto, Ohio.*