

3.26.20

How strict are you in your observance of Lent and the little things you planned to do differently during it: no deserts or candy, no movies, no beer or wine, and so on? Some of us are not so strict. We take Sundays off because Sunday, even during Lent, is the Day of the Resurrection. We might also make St. Patrick's Day and St. Joseph's feast two days later and yesterday's very important feast of the Annunciation days not covered by our small penances. But then we return to our "penances."

Is this all a little childish? Maybe. On the other hand, to do nothing different at all during this Lenten season strips it of its identity. It is life as usual. Nothing is different. And that is not good if we are trying to make Lent something different, something real, something that says that we are trying once

again to turn our lives to God and his Son, our Lord Jesus.

Our Gospel reading for Mass today is from John's gospel and begins with a mention of John the Baptist. Here the Lord describes him as "a burning and shining lamp." We also heard about John in yesterday's Gospel at Mass on the Feast of the Annunciation. It was the passage in Luke's Gospel which describes the angel Gabriel's appearance to Mary to announce to her that she was to be the mother of the Son of God. Gabriel also tells Mary that her cousin Elizabeth is now six months pregnant. Elizabeth had been childless, but, as Gabriel now says, "nothing will be impossible for God."

Might that sentence be applicable to us? Might God work in us this Lent even though our penances are small and often interrupted? Let us believe that this is the case! Then we will pray with Mary: "the

Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.”