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Recompense and Reflection, Repentance and Renewal during the Season of Lent

A Commentary by Jason Curry



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My youngest son, John, loves to play video games. Before he received his personal, hand-held game for his birthday, he would spend hours playing his older brother's games.

About a week ago, my family was traveling to church to participate in an Ash Wednesday service, and I noticed that John wasn't playing his game in the car. Initially, I thought that he lost his game, and I began to dread the idea of replacing it in the same manner that my relatives replaced lost, stolen or broken games for me. I wasn't exactly sure what happened to the game; therefore, I asked him: "Where is your game?" To my surprise, he replied: "I put it away for Lent. I'll play it again after Easter." I cannot adequately explain how I was impressed and inspired by his proclamation. His actions and our subsequent conversations reminded about the core values associated with the Christian message as expressed during the sea-

son of Lent. At the age of eleven, he understood the Christian idea of recompense; we should fast or make a personal sacrifice of something we enjoy in order to remember Jesus' ultimate sacrifice for us. He understood the importance of personal reflection; we should take an inventory of our shortcomings and those things that can distract us from Christ so that we may remove them or repent for them thereby gaining a closer relationship with God. He understood that he would really enjoy playing his game after Easter; therefore, his personal sacrifice was only preparation for the renewal that Easter morning was sure to bring. I am not sure how a young person, who is undoubtedly influenced by some of the negative elements of a hip-hop culture, could understand the theological significance of the Lenten season. However, I thank God for the ministers, teachers and the goodwill of Christians who

have contributed to his spiritual development as well as the spiritual development of many others who recognize the importance of the Lenten season.

The authority of the church is often challenged and criticized by many people throughout the nation; however, I am pleased to report that Lent is still a celebrated tradition within the church. The season of Lent begins after Epiphany on Ash Wednesday, and in many Christian traditions, the ashes from the palms of the previous Palm Sunday are painted as a cross on the foreheads of believers throughout the entire world. As a time of recompense and reflection, repentance and renewal, Lent is still a season of fasting and prayer that is sure to bring us closer to an awareness of God's eternal love for us. Let us continue to give thanks to God during this season of Lent.