

## And....I'm out

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Having attended Catholic schools, I am well versed in all the requirements that surround Lent. Mind you, I am not Catholic but consider myself Catholic by association.

I recall the nuns at my school going around the class and asking each one of us what we were giving up for Lent. To be honest, being a non-catholic I felt somewhat persecuted that I had to give up anything.

And being only a pseudo-Catholic, I'd usually give up something that I didn't much care for anyway. I mean, I prayed the Rosary and went to confession...in my book....enough was enough.

So as Sister Mary-Katherine approached my desk with her clip-board, I was ready for her.

"And what will you give up Angelique?" (my given name)

"I will give up....peanut butter." (never having been a fan of either peanut butter or jelly – I knew I was on easy street)

Sister Mary-Katherine could spot a rat a mile a way. Now that I am older, I am confident when I saw her whispering into Sister Anna-Marie's ear, she was saying, "Mark Hell next to the non-Catholic's name."

And although I graduated from Catholic school over 20 years ago, I continue to always feel a pang of Catholic guilt if I don't at least attempt to participate in Lent each year. So each Lenten season, I try to give up something ...but nothing that causes me too much angst.

Until this year, when my eldest decided to it was time we celebrated the real meaning of Lent.

"I think we should all give up something really hard for Lent. We are supposed to sacrifice something that makes us reflect on the real meaning of Easter. I am giving up soft drinks. What are you giving up Mama?"

"Ok, I will give up smoking. And this time, I am really going to do it."

There was a hushed silence and then a revolt, "But, you don't even smoke – no way – you can't give that up." (and as an aside, let me say – the fact that my kids are getting older and smarter – is really starting to cramp my style!)

As I pondered whether I could give up soft drinks, my middle child piped up, "How long does Lent last?"

"Forty days," I informed her.

"No way, I'm out!"

Followed right after by my youngest who said, "I'm not playing either."

So on Day 1, there were three standing – myself, my eldest child and my husband. We had all agreed to give up soft-drinks for Lent.

On Day 2 – the Father of the house was spotted drinking a Coke.

“Hey you can’t have that,” I lashed out.

“Yes I can. I’ve decided to give up smoking, instead.” (he doesn’t smoke)

So one week into Lent and it’s just my eldest and I left standing.

As a parent, I think it’s important to set a good example. Therefore, I am determined to stick with our agreement all through Lent. Of course, the fact that I already have one check mark for Hell next to my name ...is just extra incentive.

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