

Never give up!

But it's Lent and we are supposed to give something up, aren't we? The answer is semantic (ie how we use the words to fit the occasion!)

Let's consider for a moment the flip side of the coin 'Giving something up'. It not so much a loss as it is 'adopting a new position' or 'living in a new way'.

Perhaps we give up chocolate or wine – the point of the exercise is not so we can feel self-righteously deprived of one of life's special treats, determined 'never to give up' until Easter Day when we can

raise a glass and break the chocolate easter eggs,

and enjoy a personal sense of achievement. As self-sacrifice goes, this is a sham – and over-shadowed by the Romanian Orthodox tradition which sees everyone give up all forms of meat and dairy throughout Lent: the Easter Feast is very much a community celebration with tables laden with eggs, cheeses, fish, meats, cream... What a delight after 6 weeks of vegetables!

The point of 'giving up' or fasting for Lent is to enter into a new way of seeing ourselves and the world – perhaps to reflect on our good fortune? Or to focus our attention on a global issue – like our careless use of natural resources? Or to think on God – and how Jesus gave up everything – life, even divinity, for our sakes – the ultimate sacrifice – which opened for us the gate of glory.

Giving up something may be a blessing to someone else. Such as giving up some of our free time for someone else. Or giving up a role we have enjoyed for many years for someone else to embrace – passing on to them the joys and privileges we have experienced. We too receive a new blessing - a time of reflection and thankfulness. 'Giving up' in the right spirit brings surprising joys.

So, while you wonder what to 'give up' in Lent and why, you may also wish to consider what is worth never giving up? Maybe: never give up giving?

Never give up trying?

Never give up hoping?



*The blessing of the Easter Feast in a
Romanian church*