

# ANDY'S RESOURCE-OF-THE-MONTH: March 2017

*My Commentary on: "Extreme Demands, Extreme Mercy" By Bishop Robert Barron*

YouTube Audio → <https://youtu.be/RoipylnK2y8>

## The Demands of Lent

Today (March 1<sup>st</sup>) is Ash Wednesday. The season of Lent has arrived. What crosses every Catholic's mind is what he or she will be doing this season to prepare for Easter. Some might want to lose weight, or give up something like smoking, drinking too much or eating certain foods. These are all noble intentions, as they will improve quality of life.

This Lent, I want to focus on making a sacrifice that will improve my spiritual life. The Catholic faith has some very demanding moral laws: abstinence outside of marriage, natural family planning within marriage, holy days of obligation, confession of my serious sins to a priest once per year minimum, and weekly Mass attendance, to name a few. And these are only the very basic obligations of the faith! So I shouldn't really make a sacrifice during Lent that involves any of these. They should already be included in the regular practice of my Catholic faith. So the question remains, "What should I do to bring me to a closer relationship with Christ during Lent?"

While I reflected on how I would answer this question, I found a video by Bishop Robert Barron called: "Extreme Demands, Extreme Mercy" to be helpful. Bishop Barron highlights the extreme moral demands of the Catholic faith, but he also stresses the extreme mercy Christ's church offers us as believers.

Pope Francis declared 2016 a special "Jubilee Year of Mercy." This was a year where Catholics were invited to make a pilgrimage to a designated local parish in their diocese to physically pass through the "Holy Door of Mercy" there. As part of the pilgrimage, Catholics were also to go to Confession, partake in the Eucharist and pray for the pope. That's basically it! If these conditions were met, the pilgrim was then granted a plenary indulgence (which not only washes away all sin, but also the consequences of that sin). Normally to receive a plenary indulgence during a Jubilee year, pilgrims would need to travel all the way to Rome to pass through the holy doors at the Vatican. What a blessing this Jubilee of Mercy truly was!

Lent is also in essence an act of Christ's mercy to bring us closer to him. So this year, I have chosen to work on the seven deadly sins of pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice/greed, gluttony and, last but not least, lust. Not so much by only trying to avoid these in my life, but by trying to recognize the temptation before it becomes sin. Anger, for instance, is quite noticeable when you blow up at someone, but what about that quiet anger that nobody sees or hears? I want to focus on that part. I think if we rein in on that, then our anger will not grow to the point of obvious verbal outbursts.

Lent is a time of purging some old bad habits, which if not corrected, could affect life at home and abroad. It's a time of reflection and change. Lent brings us back to God and also closer to God. The whole family participates and it can be a time to heal old wounds.

Lent is a gift, so let's take advantage of it, just like this past Jubilee Year of Mercy. Please watch Bishop Robert Barron's video titled: "Extreme Demands, Extreme Mercy." He provides insights that will help you deepen your relationship with God and your journey into the Catholic faith this Lent.

Thanks for reading, and if you find FreeTruth.ca and our commentaries helpful in your spiritual journey, then we would like to hear from you. Contact us to let us know your thoughts.

Kindest regards,

Andy