

## SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17

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In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

— Acts 20:35

The forty days of Lent constitute a journey of giving—giving ourselves to God, as Jesus gave himself, and practicing an increasing self-sacrifice that leaves us ever more available to God as vehicles for healing the brokenness of the world. Church year after church year, we dedicate this season as a time of our own rededication to surrender. Often employing particular disciplines, we seek to remove distractions that have come to distance us from God and the world God loves. By attentiveness to our behavior, a change in routine, the removal of an habitual act or the addition of a novel practice, we walk in a new direction, following in the footsteps of Jesus as he gave himself to God on the cross.

The walk with Jesus to Jerusalem is a step-by-step procession back to God, giving ourselves more fully with each prayer and act of denial or generosity or compassion. Giving to support the weak, as Paul explained to the elders in Ephesus (in the passage from Acts upon which we reflect today), is an integral part of that self-surrender that Jesus promises will be our blessing.

— Mark Hollingsworth, Jr.