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## I enjoy these shows so much I'm giving them up for Lent

By John Doyle

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### *No more Village on a Diet, Glee or Fox News*

So what are you giving up for Lent? Really? You're very brave. I couldn't. I like the ones with the cream filling too much. Me? I'm giving up watching *Village on a Diet*, which I've enjoyed so much.

Yes, in case you're ignorant of such vital matters, Lent starts on Wednesday and will continue until Saturday, April 23. It's the time to do penance. Give up an indulgence. Good for the soul, and all that.

How do I know it's Lent? The mother told me so. I was talking to her on the phone on Sunday. Often, conversations with the mother open with her saying, "Do you know who's after dying?" Not this time. Everyone I know beyond in Ireland must be alive and thriving, for a change. First, she informed me in no uncertain terms that Manchester United was "a disgrace" in the loss to Liverpool and then she haughtily told me that I had have been better off watching Wolverhampton play Tottenham because it was a "great match with goals galore." I countered that I prefer watching Barcelona anyway. She was having none of it. "There's no Irishmen playing for that crowd."

Then Lent came up. It's a mother thing. "What are you giving up?" she asked. This gave me pause. It's devil the bit of talk about Lent I hear in this neck of the woods. I had no plans to give up anything except being cranky in this space and annoying people just for the hell of it. That had to stop anyway. Too much fun. An alternative might be moseying around asking people what they're giving up for Lent. Just to be annoying.

*Village on a Diet* was a true pleasure, though. Who could not fall for Jamie, the young stay-at-home mom whose wedding dreams were dashed when she felt so awful trying to fit into a wedding dress. The other night, the nation must have cheered when she achieved her goal of losing a lot of weight and getting married in fine style. There's one more episode coming this Monday (CBC, 9 p.m.). It's the follow-up show where we find out if the inhabitants of Taylor, B.C., succeeded in keeping off the weight. I'll have to miss it. Lent is here.

Another pleasure I'll decline is watching *The National* after *Village on a Diet* and wondering whether Pastor Mansbridge or Amanda Lang is the bigger stuffed shirt. Yes, Lent is the best time to stop a sick obsession.

And if I'm talking punishment and penance for Lent, I'll have to stop watching *Glee*. The greatest pleasure is waiting for Brittany (Heather Morris) to deliver her deadpan, delicious lines. Mr. Schue: "Who can tell me what a ballad is?" Brittany: "A male duck." Brittany to no one in particular: "Did you know that dolphins are just gay sharks?" It's a genuine pleasure. Cancelled for Lent, I guess.

Also, watching Fox News for a laugh. This is a hard one. Bill O'Reilly is attacking The New York Times again: "The New York Times is about as uber-left as you can get!" I was laughing so hard I had to swallow the Werther's

Original I was sucking on. There's another thing to give up - the hard candy for watching the news channels. Werther's for Fox. Purity Peppermint Nobs for CBC News Network. I like the Purity, a Newfoundland specialty. A certain lady actress from Mount Pearl sent me several bags. I need more, but it will wait until after Lent.

I encourage you to join me in Lenten penance. A spot of denial and discipline will do us all a world of good. Mind you, for reasons that shall remain behind a veil of secrecy, I decline to give up beer, wine and spirits. (Having written the previous sentence, I now hear the voice of the mother. Okay, okay, I'll think about it. But a person in my position needs drink to survive the slings and arrows of the column-writing racket. That's all I'm saying.)

Perhaps, instead of depriving myself of the pleasures of beer, wine and spirits, I'll watch Conservative attack ads occasionally. Yep, that's punishment. Even worse, of course, is watching John Baird or Jason Kenney act all self-righteous on TV.

I asked the mother what she was giving up. "Chocolates," she announced. I remarked that this was brave. "There's other sweets," she replied, cunningly. Now you know where I acquired the attitudes and philosophy that emanate from this column. I didn't lick it up off the road, as they say.

Me, I'm not giving up watching Barcelona. No way. I'll stick with avoiding *Glee*. Punishment is what Lent is about, isn't it? Let me know if Brittany says something particularly brilliant. Thanks. You're a saint.

### AIRING TONIGHT

**Republic of Doyle** (CBC, 9 p.m.) is all about Doyle's helper, the young fella Des (Mark O'Brien). He gets in a spot of bother (officially described as "a very bizarre and compromising position") and the Doyles work overtime to get him off the hook and save him. Shenanigans, car chases, loose women. The usual fun. Put off your Lent punishments until it's over.

*Check local listings.*

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