

COLD THERAPY

Setting: the chapel of an ice hotel. Could be Quebec. Could be Sweden. Doesn't matter. But the entire structure is made of ice. Even the pews are molded ice lined with thick fleece. There are several people in the front rows that are dressed slightly differently from the well-bundled patrons who are holding thermoses of hot drinks.

Yuerig, a young, attractive priest comes to the front of the room.

YUERIG: Welcome, welcome. Is everyone warm enough?

(There is a general consensus that they are)

YUERIG: Good, good. We are here tonight to talk about sacrifice.

WOMAN 1: Like the animals who sacrificed themselves to give us the blankets on the seats?

WOMAN 2: I don't see you sticking your bum down on bare ice.

MAN 1: Can we just listen to the man?

YUERIG: The harvesting of wool doesn't harm sheep, and removing the matted, heavy fleece keeps them cool in summer.

MAN 2: So, what's your point?

YUERIG: Sacrifice. It's what we are called to do during Lent, right? Give something up to prove our love of God, and our worthiness for redemption... but what do we sacrifice?

MAN 2: Beer.

MAN 1: I roll to disbelieve.

MAN 2: Except on Sundays.

MAN 1: More like it.

WOMAN 2: I'm giving up chocolate.

WOMAN 1: I'm giving up coffee.

WOMAN 2: Remind me to be far from you for the next forty days.

WOMAN 1: What's that supposed to mean?

WOMAN 2: Only that I know your caffeine habit. You're gonna be bitchy as hell. (to Yuerig) Sorry, Father.

YUERIG: It's alright. We're not in a service, just a chat.

Although, if you are a habitual coffee drinker, you might want to re-think your choice. Sacrifice is good, but not if it adversely affects the people around you.

WOMAN 1: So, what, I should give up bread?

WOMAN 2: Keto wouldn't kill you.

MAN 1: Not that again. What *is* it with women and carbs?

YUERIG: Enough... actually, I invited you here to suggest that for Lent this year, you give up single-use plastic. Bring your own shopping bags when you get groceries. Say no to straws at restaurants and if you get fast food, bring paper straws with you.

MAN 2: Aren't paper straws just as bad though? Because trees?

YUERIG: It's a matter of degrees. If you own metal or bamboo straws, certainly those are better, as they're reusable and bamboo is sustainable – it grows like, well... bamboo. But paper straws are at least biodegradable. They're not going to end up in landfills, or in the ocean killing animals.

WOMAN 1: That's an interesting idea.

YUERIG: Of course, the other option for Lent is to start a new practice. It could be adding exercise to your daily routine, or volunteering to walk dogs at the animal shelter.

WOMAN 2: How is exercise about Lent? Isn't that selfish?

YUERIG: No. It's self-care. You are taking care of your body so that you can do good works for longer. My mantra is "self-care is not selfishness; it's survival."

WOMAN 1: Self-care is not selfishness; it's survival. I like it.

YEURIG: Good, I'm glad. So... everyone has a warm drink, yes? Let's lift our thermos cups and toast to good works and noble sacrifice, and I expect to see you all back here on Sunday morning.

END