

Eighth Sunday Ordinary Time – Year C – 2022
Sirach 27.4-7 /// 1 Corinthians 15.54-58 /// Luke 6.39-45

→Every one of us seems to have our own preference for *the* ideal vacation spot.

→Some of us love going to the beach; while others prefer hiking the trails.

Some of us enjoy visiting large cities; while others like the quietness of camping in the woods.

→however one place that does *not* usually make a top destinations list is – the desert!

→yet in both the Old and New Testament there are many passages...

...that describe individuals and whole nations going into the desert at some time or another.

→we know well that God called his chosen people into the desert to free them from...

...whatever *distracted* them from living and embracing his love and presence.

God often called people....prophets and apostles, preachers and disciples....even Jesus himself....into the desert so that he might save and deliver them.

→and perhaps today God is calling us – as individuals and as a parish community – into the desert as well...as we begin our Lenten season this week on Ash Wednesday.

PAUSE

→our parish Lenten theme this year is “*A Season of Fresh Hope...*”

→with all that we have experienced over the past months...a resurgence of a virus variant...the continuance of the pandemic when we all thought by now it would be over...and now the hopeful signs that it may finally be coming to a manageable presence...*a Season of Fresh Hope* seems appropriate

→and where better to start this season...than by having God call *us* into the desert of our hearts...

→...so that we can make this Lent different from all previous Lents...

...and truly deepen our relationship with God with a season of fresh hope.

[you know]...the common hallmarks of Lent are prayer, sacrifice, and almsgiving...

→Prayer is something we all need to do more and so....maybe **this** is the year, for us to decide to make a special effort to spend more time in prayer, more time reading the Scriptures, and reflecting on where we are in life, and more importantly where we want to go....

→a second hallmark is that of sacrifice...

→to sacrifice means to go without something ...usually for the sake of a better cause.

→there are so many things we sacrifice throughout our lives...parents sacrifice time and sleep to take care of their children,

→young people might have to sacrifice having fun in order to improve their studies or better themselves in sports.

→and all of us will usually sacrifice our time and desires for others who we care about, or for someone close to us in need.

→the Church has always taught that sacrifice is good for the body, mind and soul.

→and during Lent we are asked to sacrifice in a number of common ways

→first by fasting from food on – Ash Wednesday and Good Friday –

→by abstaining from meat on the Friday's of Lent.....and by personally giving something up for Lent that we like or enjoy.

→the purpose of this type of sacrifice....is to encourage us to get closer to God during this time...

→...and to create a space in our soul where God can fill it with His very presence.

PAUSE

→and finally, the third hallmark of Lent is almsgiving.....—the giving to those in need....to those less fortunate than ourselves...to those who might lack even the basic necessities of life.

→this hallmark is of particular importance in our Lenten journey as we begin this year's Diocesan Appeal....

→this weekend we are united with parishes throughout the diocese in announcing the Annual Diocesan Appeal...this replaces the former Bishop's Appeal but continues the mission and hope for Catholic Charities to do its work in caring for the less fortunate

→and it also supports the many ministries and services of the wider diocesan church to continue.

→the new focus of the Annual Appeal invites us to reflect upon and take to heart the theme: *One in Hope, One in Mission...*

→Because of your generosity to last year's Appeal...just in Trumbull County alone

- ✓ Over 1500 people received emergency food assistance;
 - ✓ 2,400 received utility assistance;
 - ✓ Over 300 pregnant women received assistance through the First Step for Change program
 - ✓ And over 14,000 meals were delivered to older adults and seniors
- just to name a few of the many services that were provided.

As you can see...your donation and support of last year's Appeal certainly

--... made a difference.....in continuing the compassionate ministry of Jesus for thousands of our needy neighbors, not only in Trumbull County but throughout Northeast Ohio.

PAUSE

→this year....the need for Catholic Charities continues to increase

→the goal for this year's Diocesan Appeal is \$4million....

→Our parish goal this year is \$45,700.00

→for the past 13 years we have met or exceeded our parish goal...last year was no exception....and I hope you will join me in making it 14 years in a row.

→you should be receiving some information in the mail and also in today's bulletin there is an information packet....

...you can mail your response directly to the diocese or it can be dropped off here at the parish office or in the Sunday collection

...as always your generosity, support, and kindness to this endeavor is sincerely appreciated.

PAUSE

→We are just a few days away from our annual Lenten journey into the desert.

Through our prayer, sacrifice, and almsgiving this is a time to be... renewed in mind and recharged in spirit.

→may we go into the desert with Jesus...only to emerge ready to celebrate our Easter joy....

→and in whatever we might decide to do this Lent to deepen our relationship to God and one another...may it truly be a *season of fresh hope*...