

Fr. Fernando's Lent message 2021.

My dear Transfiguration family,

The season of Lent is upon us. Was it only a year ago that our normal routines were disrupted by the pandemic? It seems like much longer, doesn't it? Many of us feel disconnected, lost, and disheartened. I imagine the Israelites who wandered in the desert felt much the same way before they reached the Promised Land. Nothing but sand for miles and miles. It was a struggle to survive. Yet those who persisted, those who made it through, were profoundly changed by their experiences.

This pandemic can be viewed as our time in the desert. Let's think less of our suffering and look more at the good – yes, good – things that have come from this last year. We have gained much needed family time – time to reconnect with the most important individuals in our lives. Staying home has forced us to slow down the pace of our busy days. Doing so has allowed us to try new things like cooking together and Zooming with grandchildren. This time has also been an opportunity to recognize and support those heroes who have sacrificed so much to keep us healthy, safe, and productive. This includes medical staff, first-responders, teachers, grocery workers, delivery people, and countless others to whom we owe our gratitude. Our time in the desert is transforming us.

Lent is a season of reflection and change. We look inward to see how we can be more like Jesus and extend our hands outward to serve those in need. The pandemic protocols do not stop us from helping the Homebound Friends Ministry in making phone calls or sending emails to brighten someone's day. We can still share items from our cupboards with the St. Vincent de Paul pantry. We can do double duty by cleaning out our clutter and making donations to the St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store, the upcoming Refugee Welcoming weekend, or any number of other worthy charities. And we can pray – for ourselves, for others, and in thanksgiving to our Lord. For no matter how difficult our lives may be at this moment, there are countless others who are doing much worse.

We have all experienced the desolation of the desert in some way over the last year. Lent gives us forty days to **look for life in the desert** and reaffirm our commitment to being the hands and feet of Christ. Please stop by the Church to pick up a Lenten daily reflection book. There is a book for adults, *Mending Our Hearts*, and a book for families, *A New Kind of Hope*.

May the Lord bring you comfort and peace as we journey through this desert together,
Fr. Fernando Molina-Restrepo
Pastor