



“Give to the LORD, you families of nations, give to the LORD glory and praise; give to the LORD the glory due his name! Bring gifts, and enter his courts.” *Psalm 96:7,8*

Annual Collection for Catholic Charities of Central Florida

October 21 & 22, 2017

Homily Talking Points

Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Scripture: (Is 45:1, 4-6; 1 Thes 1:1-5B; Mat 22:15-21)

The readings today in Isaiah and Matthew are concerned with recognizing the hand of God at work in human history and in bringing to bear a sense of the sacred upon even the most secular circumstance. There is a phrase in Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians that requires our attention: “Our preaching of the gospel proved not a mere matter of words for you, but one of power.”

The Good News, as Paul announces had not fallen on deaf ears and hardened hearts; it had been welcomed and allowed to take root in the fertile soil of faith and hope. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the gospel of Jesus Christ took flesh.

Through the power of the Spirit, you and I put flesh on the gospel in how we reach out with compassion to minister to those in most need. For almost 60 years, Catholic Charities of Central Florida has been living out the gospel by serving those most vulnerable in our community.

Catholic Charities of Central Florida (CCCF) is a social service agency serving Brevard, Lake, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Polk, Sumter and Volusia counties in Central Florida offering four core areas of service: preventing homelessness, alleviating hunger, providing access to healthcare and caring for immigrants and refugees.

Catholic Charities Emergency Response

CCCF is engaged in providing financial assistance, short and long term, to victims of natural disasters. Recovery assistance continues to be provided to individuals in both Brevard and Volusia counties impacted by Hurricane Matthew, which hit Florida in October, 2016. Efforts to financially assist individuals impacted by Hurricane Irma are now ramping up.

In addition to these financial supports, CCCF coordinated emergency water and food distribution sites with local parishes and St. Vincent DePaul Society conferences along with volunteers from the Knights of Columbus and the Council of Catholic Women following Hurricane Irma.

These distribution sites were located at Church of the Resurrection in Lakeland, St. Joseph in Winter Haven, Blessed Sacrament in Clermont, St. Timothy in Lady Lake, St. Joseph of the Forest in Silver Spring, Our Lady of Lourdes in Daytona Beach, Blessed Sacrament in Cocoa, Church of Our Savior in Cocoa Beach, St. Joseph in Palm Bay, St. Joseph in Orlando, and St. Andrew in Pine Hills.

Assistance with food and water distribution was also provided to Brother's Keeper in Ocala and United Against Poverty in Orlando. CCCF, through its Agape Food Bank in Lakeland, also provided emergency supplies to individuals in Sebring, Lake Placid and Wachuala who couldn't receive support from Catholic Charities of Venice due to impassable roads.

Agape Food Bank also provided water to nine emergency shelters in Polk County that had inadequate supplies to serve individuals sheltering there.

Catholic Charities also assisted in assessing and serving homeless families and individuals sheltered in Brevard County, insuring they received tents and supplies to support them as they left the shelter.

Those interested in long term housing planning received that specific support. Immediate assistance was provided to individuals who had evacuated from south Florida and found themselves stranded in central Florida when they couldn't immediately return to their homes.

Catholic Charities of Central Florida continues to grow this emergency response ministry that is supported in part through the Annual Collection.

There are many ways you can help us in this work. First and foremost, please pray for the people we serve. In addition, I ask for your support today through the Catholic Charities Annual Collection.

The money received during the Annual Collection is different from other financial support that Catholic Charities receives. In many instances, the Annual Collection provides critical unrestricted funding to Catholic Charities that allows us to assist individuals and families who may not qualify for other assistance. Annual Collection funds help:

- **Prevent families from being evicted and allow them to remain in their homes;**
- **Pay for medical care, food and other emergency expenses; and**
- **Provide case management support to families who need help managing their money to avoid ongoing financial problems.**

Most of the people we help are the working poor who have nowhere else to turn. They are working very hard to change their circumstances, but come up short. They may have lost their job. They may have encountered unforeseen medical expenses. They may have been abandoned by a spouse, or experienced a trauma that has overwhelmed their ability to cope.

The assistance that Catholic Charities provides is extra help to get these individuals and families through a rough patch and to strengthen their self-sufficiency to avoid future dependency on financial assistance. Many are seeking assistance for the first time.

We all know how easy it is to slip through the cracks of our fragile world. We don't like to think about it, but we know it happens.

Please look for the Catholic Charities envelope and consider giving generously to our Annual Collection. Every little bit helps those we serve: the homeless, the hungry, seniors, the sick, immigrants and refugees. They are the faces of Christ in our world. They are the children of God. It is through our brothers and sisters that we encounter in need that we find ourselves being Christ to a world in need.

Thank you for your support of Catholic Charities Annual Collection. May God bless you.