JOURNEY IN THE DESERT  By: Deacon Andrew Froberg

Events in the Old Testament normally have counterparts in the New Testament; this is called “typology.” The time spent in the desert by the Israelites in the book of Exodus and the time in the desert by Jesus in the Gospels, and our own walk through the desert, are examples of typology and there are notable similarities (and differences, because the new is more perfect) in each.

The Israelites began their time in the desert after many wonders were performed. In the book of Exodus, Moses pleaded with the king of Egypt, referred to as Pharaoh, to let the Israelites leave Egypt so that they could worship the true and living God. At that time the Israelites were held as slaves and had to do the work they were ordered to do. They wanted desperately to receive relief. God heard their complaints and sent Moses to free them. The people of Israel, were direct descendants of one man, Jacob. Jacob was faithful to God and he was called by a new name: ‘Israel.’ Israel and his household came to Egypt and settled in peace. This lasted for more than four hundred years, until a new pharaoh came to power. The new pharaoh did not regard the Israelites with any respect and the Israelites became Egypt’s slaves.

God performed many signs and wonders through Moses and Aaron, which caused Pharaoh to finally let the Israelites go. The final sign God performed in Egypt was the death of all the first born in Egypt. The Israelites were spared due the blood of the lamb that marked the door posts and lintels. This was a powerful exclamation point to all of the other miracles. God was proving to the Israelites that He would care for them and that He was the one true and living God.

After the departure from Egypt, the Egyptians quickly perused them in order to bring them back to slavery. Despite having seen these signs, the Israelites did not trust that God would save them. At the Red Sea, the Israelites called out to Moses, saying that they were going to die, either by soldiers or by drowning in the sea. They did not have faith in God. God, of course, did save them although they did not have faith.

After the miracle of passing through the Red Sea, the Israelites were led through the desert. The people had seen the signs that were performed and yet they seemed not to take notice or realize that they were God’s chosen people and that God would provide for them. The Israelites had little faith in God despite the fact that He had just delivered them. Right after they had seen all of the miracles that God performed with Moses and Pharaoh, they lost faith in God and made a golden calf and worshiped it. They did not appreciate that God was taking care of them and that He was the one true God. They quickly abandoned their reverence and awe of the one true and living God. This is where many problems begin with us also. When we lose our awe and reverence, we become lukewarm and seek fulfillment in what the world views to be important: idols. Just like the Israelites. Money, fame, success, etc. become our “golden calves”. Caution is in order.

The gospels record Jesus’ completely different responses to His time in the desert. Unlike the Israelites, Jesus always trusted God. Where the Israelites gave into temptation and doubt, (this lack of faith is recounted in several places in the Bible as a warning to future believers), Jesus seems to undo what was done by the Israelites, and to show us the appropriate obedient response. It is remarkable when we have eyes to see the precision of the parallels. Recall that the Israelites complained to Moses that they had no bread to eat and that they should return to Egypt. God sent manna to feed the people despite their ungratefulness. This was not just a one time, or one day, event. The Israelites ate manna every day for 40 years until the day they crossed the Jordan River.

Now let’s look at the Gospels. Jesus journeyed in the desert for forty days and forty nights, one day for each of the forty years that the Israelites spent in the desert. Unlike the Israelites, Jesus did not complain, had COMPLETE faith in God, and COMPLETELY trusted that God was with Him and that God would protect Him.

Just as the Israelites were tempted, Jesus was in a battle and was tempted by the devil while He was in the desert. But Jesus was obedient to God
and had faith that God would successfully bring Him through the battle. The Israelites wanted bread, so what did the devil temp Jesus with? Yes! Bread! There are no coincidences with God. The devil wanted Jesus to be disobedient and break His fast and turn a stone into bread and there is no doubt that Jesus was hungry. This is the exact counterpart of the Israelites complaining that they had no bread! But Jesus had COMPLETE faith and said to the devil, using the Word, which is the Sword of the Spirit; piercing the devil with it: “IT IS WRITTEN, ‘man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God,’” Mt 4:4 (NASB, emphasis added). Jesus was quoting Deuteronomy 8:3 and He trusted that God would get Him through His fast. We are like the Israelites; we have also passed through the Red Sea waters of Baptism and we have seen the wonders of Jesus prior to entering our journey in the desert, attempting to reach the promised land (heaven).

During the battle with other peoples of the area, the Israelites did not believe they would win, and they feared that their enemies would again enslave them. But they failed to recognize how they truly blessed they were. They had this fear, even though during all the time in the desert they were protected and provided for by God. Jesus had complete faith in His Father’s ability to win the battle against any foe. Even though the Israelites had crossed through the Red Sea and seen the wonders of God in Egypt, they still had a long journey to get to the promised land; a journey filled with challenges that required faith in order to please God and to persevere. Time and again they fell. We have our own journey through the desert to contend with. We often fall into the same deceptions. How much do we complain along the way when God has blessed us so much?

The Israelites complained about their status; they did not have political power. So the devil tempted Jesus, promising Him the kingdoms of the world, if He would worship him. Jesus completely resisted that temptation by saying “You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve.” Lk 4:8 (NAB). Jesus was quoting Deuteronomy 6:13.

The Israelites put God to the test when they complained about water. They were worried about their physical condition and did not trust in God's provision. The devil tempted Jesus in a similar way. Jesus had complete trust and said “You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.” Lk 4:12 (NRSVCE). Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy 6:16: “Do not test the LORD your God as you tested Him at Massah,” (CSB).

It is not by chance that Jesus had to face and overcome the same temptations that the Israelites faced. It is as if Jesus was undoing the spiritual knots that had been created by the Israelite’s disobedience and lack of faith and He was showing us the way to handle temptation in our own desert of life. We should learn from the Old and New Testaments what are the proper responses and apply them. Jesus gives us the perfect example of resisting temptation. It is true that we have sinned and have offended God, but what many people do not realize is that even though the Israelites sinned time and time again, God had mercy on them over and over and did not want them to be lost. The Israelites did wander in the desert, and it did not seem they had a purpose, but they DID have a definite destination and the time in the desert DID have a purpose. God allowed this for their purification, just as He allows it for ours. They were not truly ‘wandering’ because we know that God was leading them the whole time. And He leads us also, even though, like the Israelites, we may feel like we are only wandering.

Today we are tempted in many ways, but like the Israelites, we are provided for by God and He knows all our needs. We must strive to closely follow Jesus’ example of obedience and faith. For though we are tempted, we have a mighty High Priest and Savior in Jesus Christ. He “lives to make intercession for us” and, like Moses and the Israelites, Jesus came to save us from the captivity of the devil and of sin, no matter what the sin and no matter who the people.

Our ‘journey in the desert’ is this life in Christ we have been given. We will experience temptations. We cannot forget the wonders of God and that God loves us; He is always with us; and He provides for us. We need not lose heart; God is ALWAYS faithful and true. He is “the same yesterday and forever,” Heb 13:8 (NRSVCE).

Word of Life is completely dependent upon your donations to spread the fire of the Holy Spirit in the Diocese of Erie. Your donation, no matter how much, makes a big difference!

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Text the word “give to our dedicated giving number, (570) 536-9187

Contributions can be made through the Tithe.ly app on your phone.
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"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony...." - Rev 12:11 (King James Bible)

Register online: https://www.eriercd.org/wordoflife/Greater-Things-Luncheons.html

*If registration fee is a hardship or for questions, please contact TA Walkiewicz at: (814) 833-9717 or wolccrc@eriercd.org.
*Scholarships are available*
By The Word of Their Testimony

“But they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death.”

(Revelation 12:11)

‘UNPLANNED’ MERCY by Virginia Baker (commentary by Editor)

This is the testimony of the mercy of God in the face of the gravest and most serious of sins. We know that there are women who despair of the mercy of God who need to hear this testimony. God wants to minister to you and heal you.

Last week a large group went to see, “Unplanned.” It is no coincidence that Virginia Baker shared this testimony as this movie hit the theaters. I am close friends with a pro-life missionary in Florida who has saved over 1,000 babies from abortion in 25 years. He is friends with Abby Johnson, who is the main character in this film.

The battle is real. It is a hand-to-hand spiritual fight for each precious life and each precious mother. My friend in Florida, IN FAITH, promises to help the women with WHATEVER they need that is preventing them from keeping their babies. He loves the babies and the mothers with the pure love of Christ. He receives no support except what people send him in donations. There have been times when I have been in Florida and he has had holes in his shoes because he will buy clothing for mothers and babies, but not for himself. I have many more stories like this about him. I am putting a link at the end of this article for anyone who feels led to support him. I have many more stories like this about him. I am putting a link at the end of this article for anyone who feels led to support him.

As Christians, we need to be involved in the battle through prayers, being on the front lines if possible, and through financial support in whatever way we are capable. 1,000 babies! Can you imagine this? I can tell you one thing.

I looked at my hands on the day that you were aborted. And all I could see was the innocent blood of my child. So I put these hands into the deep pockets of my heart and forgot about it. There are some people that remember the day and the year of their abortions. All I remember was how sunny it was. I was living my life the way I wanted to live it. I didn't believe in anything, just the reality I saw around me. Until that day when my beautiful savior called me to his Sacred Heart, saying "Virginia, come home." When that door was opened, my life began; walking with my Jesus, side by side. Very gently, very sweetly. He opened my heart and I saw those hands that were covered with innocent blood. They weren't covered with the blood of Life, they were covered with the blood of my daughter.

"I was so ashamed and so guilt-stricken and no matter how hard I tried to hide my hands back in the pocket of my heart, Jesus would take those hands back out. I spent years scrubbing these hands, trying to wash the blood away. No matter how hard I washed, no matter how hard I scrubbed, the stain remained permanently. Until one day my Jesus said to me " My child. Please stop washing your hands and let me take this blood from you."With shame and guilt I held out these blood-stained hands. Just like Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, He too, day by day, was washing my hands. But as he was washing my hands the blood was reappearing, until he said:"There. My child you are made clean."But I said Jesus these hands are bloody. Nobody, not even You can wash it away."Then Jesus said in a gentle loving voice: this bloodstain is not the blood of your child. This is the Blood of the Lamb, who takes away the sins of the world. "As I repented, Jesus healed and cleansed me and, as He spoke these words to my heart, I felt His mercy. I thank and praise Him that HIS Blood covers EVERY sin when we repent from our hearts."

If you feel led to share a similar testimony or any testimony, please email Word Of Life.

We pray for an abundance of financial and spiritual blessing upon the pro-life ministry of Pregnancy Outreach Ministries in Cocoa Beach, Florida: www.paypal.me/pregnancy333 or contact Word Of Life and we will assist you with mailing a donation.
Experience your own Pentecost! The WOL CCRC sponsors ‘The Gift,’ which is a Life In The Spirit Seminar with internationally renowned speakers, an endorsement by the Pope.

There is also a formal nihil obstat given to one of the primary authors and speakers, Charles Whitehead. This powerful seminar consists of six talks, small group discussions, live worship, and culminating in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

**ST. MARY'S**
1085 Water Street
Meadville, PA 16335

Friday and Saturday
June 21 and June 22, 2019

Friday 6:00:00 PM - 9PM
Saturday 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

Register online at:
https://www.eriercd.org/wordoflife/thegiftseminar.html

**SPIRITUAL GIFTS WORKSHOP**
Developing the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Have you ever wondered what Gifts of the Holy Spirit are strongest in you? Or maybe you doubt that you have any. If you are aware of your gifts, do you desire to understand them better and “take them to the next level?” THEN THIS WORKSHOP IS FOR YOU!

Patricia Montefiori and Jacqueline Phillips will teach and share on how the Gifts of the Holy Spirit work and how to and how to practically apply them in your life and ministry. Jaci and Pat are both experienced prayer group leaders and have been active in the Charismatic Renewal for over 25 years. They love to see people come alive in their faith and in the power of living God!

This is a safe and friendly environment to both learn and practice the Gifts. Contrary to what we sometimes think, the Gifts do not necessarily just descend on us in full power at the moment that we are Baptized in the Holy Spirit. We have to step out in them. And that can be a little intimidating in your everyday life. So this is a safe place to learn and to practice; to Fan into the Flame!

**ONLINE REGISTRATION IS PREFERRED AT:**
www.eriercd.org/wordoflife/seminar.html

**WORD OF LIFE**
is in need of volunteers for Men’s prison ministry For prayer groups and Life In The Spirit Seminars
Please contact Dan Zuba
(814) 825-7195

**I was in prison and you came to visit me. Matthew 25:36b**

“**For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.**”
1 Tim 1:6-7 (NIV)

**FAN INTO THE FLAME—REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS JUNE 3RD**
Friday, June 7, 2019 (6PM—9PM) & Saturday, June 8, 2019 (8:30AM—3:30 PM)
Location: Please call for Location and Registration—Joan (814) 616-5735

Name: 
Address: 
City: State: Zip: 
Phone: 
Email: 

**COST—$20.00**
(Scholarships Available)

Please make check or money order payable to:

Word of Life
Mail payment to: Word of Life Catholic Charismatic Renewal Center 429 E. Grandview Blvd
A Spiritual Slap in the Face
Today's first reading really hit me. I sat down after reading those verses and began journaling to my Lord. I realized, with His help (praise God!), that I'm really only "half-trying" to put Him first. Lately I have been trying to put time with Him above all else. I've successfully cut out all social media (except posting blog updates) because that is a HUGE distraction from Him and I also try to cut off my TV time if it ends up going over the amount of time I spent with Jesus that day. Now, I'm not perfect at this every day. Sometimes Fixer Upper turns into three or four episodes instead of just one or two, when I only spent a half hour with Jesus earlier that day. I'm so far from perfect.

Desiring Closeness with My LORD
I've been frustrated with myself because my motivation level is so low compared to how it used to be. I know exhaustion is part of it, but laziness is definitely another part. I want to feel close to Him like I did in 2017. That year was wonderful. I was anxious for the kids to go down for naps, not to catch up on TV shows, YouTube episodes, or mindlessly scroll through Facebook, but to begin my 1-2 hours of prayer time with my Lord. I felt so close to Him! Every single day! I couldn't wait to run to Him. And I honestly can't even tell you what changed. I still don't know.

Do Not Delay Your Conversion
In today's first reading, the book of Sirach says: “Do not say, ‘His mercy is great; my many sins he will forgive.’ For mercy and anger alike are with him; his wrath comes to rest on the wicked. Do not delay turning back to the Lord, do not put it off day after day. For suddenly his wrath will come forth; at the time of vengeance, you will perish. Do not rely on deceitful wealth, for it will be no help on the day of wrath." (Sirach 5:6-8, NAB, emphasis added) Through what I can only assume was the Holy Spirit, this reading made me realize why I don't feel close to Him. I need to LOVE like Him!

Out of My Comfort Zone
Yes, that includes loving my husband and my children with patience and gentleness. I need to love them so that they see Him in me. And, if we're being honest, crazy-yelling mom doesn't scream Jesus. But thank God for the Sacraments! The Eucharist for my spiritual strength (John 6:51-58), the sacrament of Confession (John 20:23) to restore my soul back to God when I've drifted too far in sin, and the humility to apologize to my children when I've done something wrong. What I realized was that I need to love with difficulty. I need to love out of my comfort zone. It needs to be uncomfortable for me to love.

Do They See Jesus in Me?
I love my family so much it hurts, but I realized that I need to love my neighbors better. I cringe every time I see my neighbor parked in my parking spot because I have 5 children and he's a healthy, young, single doctor. I get angry because he's a crappy parker, often taking up two spots and pushing me further from my front door, creating a longer distance to wrangle 5 children safely into our little town home. Then I usually finish off my complaining with a door slam so he knows I'm irritated. He'd actually probably be surprised if he knew I was a Christian. And then my very observant 6-year-old repeats those grumblings that I share because that's simply what I am teaching him. Ouch. Jesus wouldn't get angry. He'd offer my neighbor those two spots and then a couple more.

I also do not "click" with a fellow momma neighbor a couple doors down, so I do not go out of my way for her to avoid discomfort, even though she has for me many times. Another tough realization. Jesus would love her so much better than I do. He'd invite her over for dinner often and sit on the front doorstep talking to her for hours if she wanted.

And my estranged dad is incredibly difficult to talk to. I believe the alcoholism has physically ruined his mind so conversations are a serious effort. He hasn't been a part of my life since I was 17 years old and the anger of him choosing alcohol over me still creeps into my heart some days. When he texts me, I wince and debate on whether to send a message back. Jesus wouldn't turn down a conversation with him. Ever.

An Incredible Example
I can't pick and choose who I love. Because that is not difficult. I need to love with difficulty. I need to step out of my comfort zone. Lord Jesus, YOU loved with difficulty! You sweat blood it was so difficult! You were completely out of Your comfort zone - this awful, awful thing happened to You, but you loved with SUCH difficulty that you opened up the gates of heaven for us! For ME!

Love MUST sometimes hurt!
If I can love these people the way Jesus asks me to, I can expose them to HIM! What a beautiful thing! I can be a part of: I just need to be willing to take that first step that Jesus is calling me to take. A step into love. This is why we must love out of our comfort zones. This is why Jesus died on the Cross - he had to be an example for us as Christians so we know how to love those who are hard to love. True love - true Christian love - MUST hurt sometimes! It’s NOT easy. But we are called to love, not only those we like and who are easy to love, but to love ‘as He loved us.’

The Holy Spirit has given me the inspiration and grace to go beyond what is comfortable and “enlarge the site of [my] tent, and let [my] curtains be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen [my] ropes, and drive [my] pegs deep,” (Isaiah 54:2, CSB). He has given me the gift to expand my borders of love! And I am so grateful.

Are you willing to take that first steps into expanding the borders of who you love?
REGISTRER ONLINE AT:
https://www.eriercd.org/wordoflife/thegiftseminar.html
Or call Joan at 814-616-5735

HEALING MASSES (SPIRIT-FILLED)
Sponsored by Son of God Prayer Group
Holy Rosary Church, 2701 East Ave, Erie
Tuesday, May 14, 2019
6:30 PM (Worship 6:15)

HEALING MASS
St. Joseph Parish - Warren, PA
Friday, June 28, 2019 - 6:00PM

GREATER THINGS LUNCHEON
HOW TO SHARE JESUS
Fr. Johnathan Schmolt
St. Joseph Bread of Life Church - 147 West 24th St, Erie
Saturday May 18, 9:30am to 1pm (Lunch Included)
See enclosed registration form on Page 3

FAN INTO THE FLAME SEMINAR
STEPPING OUT IN SPIRITUAL GIFTS
Leaders: Jaci Phillips and Pat Montefiori
St. Joseph Bread of Life Church - 147 West 24th St, Erie
Friday & Saturday, June 7-8, 2019
Friday 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM Saturday 9:00 am - 3:30 PM

COME TO JESUS
ADORATION WORSHIP CONCERTS
St. Joseph Bread of Life Church - 147 West 24th St, Erie
Free Will Offering to Support Erie Charismatic Renewal/Word of Life Center
Worship by Jaci Phillips, Brianna Erdman and friends with special guest,
Erie Philhamonic violinist, Louis Nicolia
Exposition and Benediction by Fr. Johnathan Schmolt
Friday, September 7, 2019 7 PM - 9 PM

First Saturday of the Month
Mass in honor of Our Lady
9:00 am at St Gregory’s, Northeast, PA
Sacred Music beginning at 8:50
Music provided by: Soloist, Jacqueline Phillip;
Violinist, Louis Nicolia; and Organist Corey Spacht
Celebrant: Rev. Jerry Priscaro

† SUNDAY
Shalom in Jesus Prayer Group
In home, DuBois, PA
Rick Kenawell (814) 771-7932

Acts II Community
St. Julia Church, Erie, PA
West Lake Rd. & Powell Ave.
6:30 PM
Jack Heintzel (814) 838-1325

† MONDAY
Disciples of the Holy Spirit
St. Mary's Church Annex
139 Church St., St. Marys, PA
6:00 PM
Mary Ellen Frank (814) 781-3904

St. Andrew Chapel
(formerly Leopold Center group)
Chaplet of Divine Mercy and Rosary
1116 West 7th St., Erie PA
3:15 pm (before Mass)
Mary Lou Peterson (814) 866-5678

River of Life PG
St. Bridget Ch., Rm. 4, Meadville, PA
2nd & 4th Monday evenings
7:00 PM
Amy Mosbacher (814) 724-6104

† TUESDAY
Son of God Prayer Group
Holy Rosary Church
2701 East Ave, Erie PA
7:00 PM
Pat Montefiori (814) 823-3968

St Stephen’s
Social Center
includes Adoration in Church
21 State St, Oil City, PA
also from 6:30 - 7:30pm
Rosalie Bablak (814) 671-7993

† FRIDAY
Light of the World Community
In Home Prayer Meeting
Call for location
1:00 PM
T.A. Walkiewicz (814) 833-9717

God’s Holy Love
11 Russell St., Warren, PA
Call for Details
Virginia Baker (781) 217-1683

† CALL FOR DETAILS
Promises Of God
St. Mary's Church - Crown, PA
Denise Varo (814) 744-8199
Reflections is published monthly by:

Word of Life Catholic Charismatic Renewal Center
429 E. Grandview Blvd, Erie PA 16514
Phone: (814) 824-1286
Fax: (814) 824-1285
e-mail: wolcrc@eriercd.org
website: www.eriercd.org/wordoflife
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The office is generally open limited hours.
Please call before coming.

The purpose of this newsletter is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to provide teaching, news and calendar of events, which help to foster Catholic Charismatic Renewal throughout the Diocese of Erie.

This newsletter may be copied to put in churches or shared with others.

Chief Editor
Jacqueline Phillips-Sabol, PhD
Editors
Elaine Sinnott; Amy Mosbacher
Formatting
Elaine Sinnott; Loretta Laufer

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