LENT 2022 MASS TALK

 Good evening/afternoon/morning,

My name is …………….. and I work/volunteer for Trócaire, which is the overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland and I am here today to tell you about Trócaire’s Lent appeal this year.

**or**

This weekend, our homily is on behalf of Trócaire, the overseas development agency of our Catholic Church here in Ireland.

Firstly, I wish to thank you for the support you give to Trócaire’s work each year. Your donations reach thousands of vulnerable communities and families all over the world. This help is critical, and it allows us to continue our work every year. The Lenten period is a time when people recommit their support for their brothers and sisters around the world through Trócaire’s Lenten Appeal.

I stand before you at a time when the eyes of the world are on the unfolding humanitarian disaster in Ukraine. Trócaire is responding to that crisis through our partners on the ground in Ukraine and Poland right now. They are providing shelter and essential supplies, including food, blankets, and hygiene supplies.

However, we are deeply conscious of the many millions of people around the world who are also facing crisis, and who are at risk of being forgotten and left behind. Millions of people in countries such as South Sudan, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo are displaced by conflict and some are facing famine. We support these communities in these forgotten crises through the annual Lenten appeal, which we are very grateful to you for supporting.

This Lent, Trócaire’s Appeal highlights the impact that climate change and Covid-19 has on people’s lives in Zimbabwe and how your love and generosity can give families a chance to build a better tomorrow. From Southern Zimbabwe, we hear the story of Thandekile and her two children -her daughter Nomatter who is 11, and her son Forward who is 8. [It is helpful to have a box in your hand on the altar]

 Thandekile was just 31 when Covid-19 claimed the life of her beloved husband, Donovan, last year. In Zimbabwe, where the cruel effects of poverty, the pandemic and climate change have left people on the brink of catastrophe, Thandekile must face her grief all alone.

The impacts of climate change meant that life was already a struggle for Thandekile and her family, bringing drought and unpredictable rainfall. Covid-19 disrupted the family’s life even further, as markets and schools were closed. Thandekile is working hard to provide for her children and with the support of Trócaire’s local partner organisations, she hopes that her efforts will be enough to build a better tomorrow for her family.

Thandekile’s struggle is tireless as she takes care of her two precious children. She is a strong woman and she believes and hopes for a better future. Every day, Thandekile puts all she has into being mother and father to her children. She strives to be self-sufficient and she hopes to start up a clothes shop business, to make a better life for herself and her family.

It is not just that she must overcome so many obstacles to provide for her family. However, Thandekile’s faith is important to her and she says that the Lord’s Prayer gives her courage, hope and strength. She sees that courage, hope and strength in the help she receives from people like you and the local partner organisations that work with Trócaire.

These values of courage, hope and strength are exactly why the bishops of Ireland founded Trócaire, and almost 50 years later these values have never been more relevant. The Covid-19 crisis has shown us how small our world actually is, and we pray for all those affected by the virus in Ireland, Zimbabwe and around the world. We also pray for peace in our world, especially in Ukraine and other countries affected by conflict.

In places like Southern Zimbabwe, hard working families who already live below the poverty line are unable even to grow enough food to feed themselves because of drought and climate change. They are doing everything they can to stand on their own two feet, but the upheaval and loss of Covid has only made the burden worse with women and girls shouldering the worst of the load.

Last year, your generosity helped us to support 2.7 million people in 20 countries. That impact is thanks to you. Every one of us in Trocaire is so thankful for your support. This Lent, it will provide vital help to Thandekile and her family and to many more like them as they strive to create better futures for their families.

We are delighted to tell you that this Lent again the UK government will match all donations received before 1st June to the Lenten Appeal in Northern Ireland  pound for pound up to £2 million, helping thousands of people in Zimbabwe.

Because a better tomorrow belongs to us all.

This Lent we ask you to once again stand in support of families like Thandekile’s. Please take home a Trócaire box, or visit our website to find our other ways to support our work.

I conclude with these words from Archbishop Alex who is the Archbishop of Bulawayo in Zimbabwe -Trócaire works with the Archdiocese and their partner Caritas Bulawayo. Archbishop Alex says the following;

“In the spirit of faith and in the spirit of humanity, I want to appreciate the support of the people of Ireland. I would also like to appeal to you to open your hearts as much as possible; especially regarding food shortages, livelihoods, sanitation, education and health, these are our needs. And I would say that we have nothing much to give you back, we are always grateful to you, and every Sunday, when our people gather, we can assure you of our prayers for your generosity. I can only encourage you all to keep this partnership in the spirit of our faith.”

Without your support, we would not be able to do the work we do on your behalf. Thank you to Fr…… for your invitation to speak here today. Thank you all for your time and blessings on your continued kindness and generosity.

(**Insert here how parishioners can collect a Trócaire box in a way that is safe for everyone e.g from the porch of the church. Donations to the Lent campaign can also be made online at** [**www.trocaire.org**](http://www.trocaire.org)**)**