

Fr. Charles Puthota's Blog

February 28, 2021

From the Pastor's Desktop



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Archdiocesan Annual Appeal (AAA) 2021: This is Week II of the month-long concerted campaign for reaching the goal of \$40,000. I spoke in my homily last Sunday as we launched the AAA 2021. We are making steady progress in reaching our goal. During our month-long drive, the names of the donors for \$25 and above will be placed in the bulletin. If you have donated and your name is not on that list, please let the office know. I'm asking Ron Bork to speak this weekend on the need to donate to AAA. If you are able to give 1% (\$400), it would make it easier for us to reach the goal quickly. Thank you for all your collaboration and support.

Luke's Gospel for Lent: Let's keep reading Luke as a parish Lenten spiritual project. A paragraph or half a chapter each day. We'll encounter Jesus and come to faith in him.

Lenten Musings: This sacred season started on a good note on Ash Wednesday. Because of COVID-19, there was a different mood this year. We had two Masses that day: at 8:00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. The ashes were sprinkled on the crown of our heads. There was no opportunity this year to wear the ashes proudly and penitentially on our foreheads. Metaphorically, we have to wear them on our hearts as God is calling us to prayer, penance, and almsgiving. The words "Remember, you are dust and to dust you will return" were uttered by the priest only once in general to the whole congregation and not to each individual. Dust and death are strong reminders on Ash Wednesday. A strong language indeed! And a wake-up call.

The ashes and the words about our returning to dust are reminders that our lives in this world are not permanent. In fact, we do not own anything, even though we have an illusion of it. If we really owned anything, we would be able to take it into the next world. Since obviously we cannot take anything beyond this world, we are only entrusted with certain things for a time. That is why we need to be responsible stewards of God's blessings to us, be they material or spiritual. This season of Lent, we are to gain perspective on what to do in this life, how to live and love, how to relate to people and things, what is important and what is not, what is eternal and what is not, what matters and what doesn't, what is true happiness and what isn't.

When we are able to see these things a bit more clearly, when we awaken to the reality of life, it is then we will truly begin to live from the soul. Lent is a special time to figure these things out. Sometimes, we can go through decades of life or a whole lifetime, without discovering what God wants us to do and how he wants us to live. While we are engaged in all sorts of spiritual activities this season, let all these efforts converge on a deepening and maturing of our relationship with God and others where love and humility flourish. Happy hunting this season of Lent---for all those blessings money cannot buy!

Word of God this Second Sunday of Lent: In the gospel, we read about the Transfiguration of Jesus. It's a moment of the divine identity of Jesus. Upon the mountain, the apostles are privileged to glimpse into the mystical experience of the Son of God. The voice from heaven booms: "This is my chosen son; listen to him." Remember Mary's words at the wedding at Cana: "Do whatever he tells you." Lent may be a good time for us to steer clear of the din of life and listen deeply to Jesus. He is the Lord of history and mystery. He's present in the world today, in the body of believers, in the Word of God, in the Eucharist, in our prayer, penance, and almsgiving, in the poor and needy, in the signs of the times. Like those at the final judgment, we might say: When did we see you hungry, naked, stranger and help you or not help you? We could easily miss the presence of Jesus. Let's walk with him as he journeys through his public ministry toward the cross, death, and resurrection

A Story to Ponder: In the last century, a tourist from the United States visited the famous Polish rabbi Hafez Hayyim. He was astonished to see that the rabbi's home was only a simple room filled with books. The only furniture was a table and a bench. "Rabbi, where is your furniture?" asked the tourist. "Where is yours?" replied Hafez. "Mine? But I'm only a visitor here." "So am I," said the rabbi.

Quotable Quote: "You be the change you want to see in the world" --- Mahatma Gandhi.

Religious Jokes: 1. Atheist: "Do you honestly believe that Jonah spent three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish?" Preacher: "I don't know, sir, but when I get to heaven, I'll ask him." Atheist: "But suppose he isn't in heaven?" Preacher: "Then you ask him."

2. After the Baptism of his baby brother in church, little Johnny sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car. His father asked him three times what was wrong. Finally, the boy replied, "That priest said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, but I want to stay with you guys."

Wishing you health, happiness, and God's closeness in this season of Lent,

Your Friend & Pastor,

Fr. Charles Pothota