

Fr. Charles Puthota's Blog

March 20, 2022

From the Pastor's Desktop



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Archdiocesan Annual Appeal 2019 (AAA): Our goal is: \$30,500. We are making progress, but we have ways to go in achieving our goal. Please see the names of the AAA 2022 donors in the bulletin. There is an asterisk for those who have donated \$305 or more, our 1% Circle. Thank you for your generosity and good will toward St. Elizabeth Church and the ministries and services of the Archdiocese. Your donations go toward strengthening the work the Archdiocese is called to do by our Lord Jesus Christ in building up the Kingdom of God here and now. To those who have not given so far: would you please prayerfully consider supporting AAA?

Lent: Appearance Versus Reality; Truth Versus Falsehood: We are in another season of Lent. First of all, it's not a time of doom and gloom. Actually, it is a time of joy because we make another effort at renewing our lives---and that truly brings us peace and fulfillment. Getting away from the superficiality of life, we try to go deeper into the meaning of life and love. Often times, we are blinded or dazzled by appearances, but Lent is a time for us to go beyond---to the root of things, to the heart of the matter. Religions warn us about the dangers of living in a world of appearances rather than in a world of reality. We are bombarded with lies or half-truths. The media often times present distorted or embellished facts. Often we are taken in by these falsehoods because they are presented attractively or in a clever manner. Lent is a time to get grounded in reality of our human existence; its purpose, its goal, its direction. On Ash Wednesday, in the Gospel, Jesus challenged us that when we pray, fast, and give alms, we are to do these not to blow our own horn but for the sake of the invitation from the Heavenly Father who sees everything in a hidden way and fulfills our dreams and desires. Ultimately, our lives have to be grounded in God who is the inner reality of our lives. He is the ground of our being, the foundation of our lives, the reason for our existence, the author of our lives, the source of our goodness, the origin of our love. If we are able to live a life united with God, then we are able to discern all sorts of shallow things that we need to get away from and all sorts of other things we need to embrace in order to be true to ourselves. "To thine own self be true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man," says Polonius in Hamlet.

Parish Lenten Retreat: Last Saturday March 12, I preached a retreat to our parishioners on the theme of Prayer. 43 people attended it. It started with the Mass at 8:30 a.m. followed by an excellent breakfast in Cantwell Hall. There were three sessions on Prayer and we concluded the Retreat with a splendid Mexican-style lunch. Each session started and ended with a hymn. There was a very cordial and happy atmosphere among the participants throughout. I would like to thank the volunteers, including **Phil McCarthy, Sharon Soares, David Gemignani, Richard John, Saydha Henderson, Luz Bansuelo, Judy Labaria, Fe Macatangay,** for all their dedicated service in making this event not only successful but really enjoyable. Maybe, we could have a Retreat next in Advent or again in Lent. Apart from the spiritual insights and inspiration, such events bring people together in a social setting and provide opportunities for people to work together as a team. It's service to God and God's people.

Pray for Ukraine: Second Collection the weekend of March 26 and 27 will be taken up for Ukraine through the collection for Catholic Relief Services (CRS). At the suggestion of the Archdiocese, I will be sending this second collection to Catholic Relief Services, via the Archdiocese, with the specific notation that this amount be used for helping those affected by the war in Ukraine. Let's keep praying for Ukraine. People of goodwill and decency are shocked by the barbarity of this war. Over 3 million people have already fled Ukraine due to this war, according to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi. Pope Francis has condemned the Russian invasion last Sunday, calling it a massacre. "The only thing to do is to stop this unacceptable armed aggression before it reduces cities into cemeteries," the Holy Father told a crowd of worshippers gathered at St. Peter's Square in Vatican City during his Sunday blessing. The Pope also urged people to take in refugees from Ukraine. "In the name of God, I ask you: stop this massacre!" the Pope said, before asking the crowd to join him in silent prayer for an end to the war.

Pilgrimage to Jordan & the Holy Land: October 05 - 17, 2022: I'll be spiritual director of this pilgrimage. If you are interested in joining, you are most welcome. Check out: www.pilgrimages/frputhota. For a brochure, please call the parish office. You may also call 206 Tours (pilgrimage company) at 800-206-8687.

Happy St. Patrick's Day: March 17: We celebrated the Feast of St. Patrick on March 17. "Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise, Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me." (From St. Patrick's famous Breastplate Prayer).

An Irish Blessing: "May your neighbors respect you, Trouble neglect you, The angels protect you, And heaven accept you."

Your Friend and Pastor,

Fr. Charles Puthota