

# Fr. Charles Puthota's Blog

March 27, 2022

From the Pastor's Desktop



**Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,**

**Archdiocesan Annual Appeal (AAA): The amount to raise is: \$30,500. 1% Percent is \$305. Please donate early and generously.** Please see in the bulletin the names of those who have donated so far to AAA 2022. A couple of weeks ago, Ron Borg spoke at both our weekend Masses, eloquently summarizing why we need to support AAA. I'd like to thank him for his persuasive talk at the Mass. We launched our AAA drive at the weekend Masses of February 13, 2022. Over 1200 letters have been sent to our registered parishioners. I preached at all Masses that weekend. The reason for this campaign is simple: the Archdiocese is entrusted with a mission to preach the good news and to provide all necessary ministries and services to all the parishes within the Archdiocese. Without our assistance, at the Archdiocesan level they could not be doing what they are called to do. So we feel privileged to help and collaborate in their work. Also, let us keep in mind, we are not apart from the Archdiocese. We, our parish and all other parishes, make up the Archdiocese. When we strengthen the Archdiocese, we are actually strengthening our own St. Elizabeth Parish. So please give generously and early so that we can complete this campaign soon. Your spirit of stewardship and generous donations are much appreciated. Please would you keep St. Elizabeth Parish and the Archdiocese as your Number One charity to support because we are part and parcel of these faith-based, nonprofit communities

**The Season of Lent: What shall we give up for Lent?** Give up complaining—focus on gratitude. Give up pessimism—become an optimist. Give up harsh judgments—think kindly thoughts. Give up worry—trust Divine Providence. Give up discouragement—be full of hope. Give up bitterness—turn to forgiveness. Give up hatred—return good for evil. Give up negativism—be positive. Give up anger—be more patient. Give up pettiness—become mature. Give up gloom—enjoy the beauty all around you. Give up jealousy—pray for trust. Give up gossiping—control your tongue. Give up sin—turn to virtue. Give up giving up—hang in there!

**Quotes for Lent:** "Not all of us can do great things. But we can all do small things with great love." --- Mother Teresa. "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer" (Rom 12:12). "Return to me with your whole heart." (Joel 2:12). "Don't despair over your shortcomings. Start over each day. You make spiritual progress by continually beginning again and again." --- St. Francis de Sales.

**Word of God: The Prodigal Son:** The gospel this Fourth Sunday of Lent is about the Prodigal Son from Luke's gospel, chapter 15. Jesus is a brilliant storyteller, full of imagination, insight, and wisdom. Instead of merely stating that God is a merciful father, he gives that truth in parables, thus appealing to our whole being. As you know, there are two other parables in this chapter: the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin. The parable about the lost, prodigal son is all about sin and redemption, thanks to God's astonishing love and mercy. The younger son broke the heart of the father, but he changes his mind and returns to the father, begging to be accepted not as a son but a servant. But the father restores him to full sonship, symbolized in the ring, sandals, and the robe. He even has ordered the feast to celebrate his return. The older son is angry and unhappy. The younger son stands for the sinners and tax-collectors. The elder son represents the religious and civil authorities. This parable may be considered the gospel within the gospel. Such is the feeling of loss and heartbreak, but also the joy of returning to where we belong. We cannot be lost. We cannot be misplaced. We need to be where our God in Jesus Christ is. That's where we find our home. What are the ways in which I have gone away from my Father? What the ways in which I am not in consonance with the teachings and values of Jesus? We need to recognize our being lost and make the wise decision of returning to where we belong, to "remain" in Jesus and in the Father. As the responsorial psalm says, let's "taste and see the goodness of the Lord." In the second reading, from the Second Letter to the Corinthians, the same theme of our return to God is echoed: "Whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come."

**Let's Keep Praying for Ukraine:** Let there be peace on earth, everywhere, especially in Ukraine! Pope Francis said last Sunday, referring to the war: "All this is inhuman!...Indeed, it is also sacrilegious because it goes against the sacredness of human life, especially against defenseless human life, which much be respected and protected, not eliminated, and which comes before any strategy! Let's not forget: it is cruelty, inhuman and sacrilegious." The Holy Father made the above remarks in his weekly Sunday address to pilgrims at St. Peter's Square in Vatican City. The Pope also visited the Vatican-run Bambino Gesù Pediatric Hospital, and consoled the wounded Ukrainian children who managed to escape the conflict. March 25, the solemnity of the Annunciation, is the day of the Holy Father's consecration of Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

**A Couple of Humorous Stories to Ponder:**

1. "So this was your first flight. Were you scared?" "Well, to tell you the truth, I didn't dare put my full weight down on the seat."
2. Some things are best left as they are: An enthusiastic young man who had just graduated as a plumber was taken to see Niagara Falls. He studied it for a minute, then said. "I think I can fix this."

Your Friend and Pastor,

Fr. Charles Puthota