

Fr. Charles Puthota's Blog

May 1, 2022

From the Pastor's Desktop



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Easter Musings: These days of Easter, the gospel anecdotes about the risen Christ have one thing in common: the apostles and others to whom Jesus appears do not easily recognize Jesus. It takes time for them to awaken into the identity of Jesus. Jesus does all sorts of gentle and kind things to encourage them into the reality of his resurrection. Mary Magdalene, for example, thinks that Jesus is a gardener. Others at times think that he is a ghost. The two Emmaus disciples do not recognize him; something keeps their eyes from recognizing him; they finally see him as Jesus only in the breaking of the bread, though their hearts were burning when he interpreted the scriptures. At the resurrection of Jesus, something is the same, something is different. He is a new being. He can appear inside the locked rooms. He has body, but his body is so different that they cannot see him as Jesus immediately: they are startled and terrified. Those who were very close to him go through this situation again and again.

What about us? Over 2000 years later, can we recognize the risen Christ? Something is preventing us from seeing him in our lives. Are we afraid, terrified, and startled like the apostles? Do these fears keep us from recognizing Jesus? Or are we being just plain busy with so many other things that Jesus is unable to rise in our minds and hearts? We have a bigger challenge than that faced by the early apostles. We have never seen Jesus with our physical eyes. We can feel, touch, recognize, and encounter Jesus only through the spirit. We have to let our minds and hearts find Jesus. It's the inner seeing that can lead us to the risen Christ. It takes quietness and peace --- and plumbing of our inner depths. Are we ready to recognize this person who has fascinated the world for over 20 centuries? Are we ready to look at the Jesus of History and Jesus of Faith and come to a conviction that Jesus who lived a couple of thousands of years ago is truly living now in our lives and in the world? Can we be adventurous enough to try to remove all sorts of obstacles that prevent us from recognizing him, loving him, and following him here and now?

Evaluation of Lent and Holy Week: I had invited for an evaluation and a thank-you luncheon all those who were closely connected with the liturgical preparations and celebrations of the season of Lent starting with Ash Wednesday through the Holy Week up to the Easter Sunday. We had this session on Tuesday April 26 in Cantwell Hall. The sacristans, those in the choirs, those who decorated the church, and some others closely connected with the celebrations were present. We went over each liturgical event during the season and felt grateful for the way everything went well. We also had some suggestions for the future so that we could always keep improving on how we could serve our parishioners better. I would also like to thank the parishioners for their participation in the spiritual/liturgical celebrations and for their generous donations to the parish during this season.

Archdiocesan Annual Appeal: We still need **\$1,787** to reach our goal of **\$30,445**. The latest communication from the Archdiocese shows that we have so far donated \$28,658. Thanks to all those who have donated so far. Those of you who are still considering, please do give, if possible, early and generously. Also, please check your names on the last page of the bulletin for anyone who donated above \$25. If your name is not there, please would you contact the parish office.

The Pontifical Good Friday Collection: This year our collection on Good Friday at St. Elizabeth was \$2,056. As you may be aware, the Good Friday collection taken up in the Catholic Church all over the world goes toward the pastoral, social, charitable, educational, ecumenical, liturgical activities and the maintenance of the holy shrines in the 29 parishes in the Holy Land entrusted to the Franciscan Order. Thank you for your generous donations.

An Easter Joke: Three fools died and are at the pearly gates of heaven. St. Peter tells them that they can enter the gates if they can answer one simple question. St. Peter asks the first fool, "What is Easter?" He replies, "Oh, that's easy! It's the holiday in November when everyone gets together, eats turkey, and are thankful..." "Wrong!" replies St. Peter, and proceeds to ask the second fool the same question, "What is Easter?" The second one replies, "Easter is the holiday in December when we put up a nice tree, exchange presents, and celebrate the birth of Jesus." St. Peter looks at the second fool, shakes his head in disgust, tells him he's wrong, and then peers over his glasses at the third fool and asks, "What is Easter?" The third fool smiles confidently and looks St. Peter in the eyes, "I know what Easter is." "Oh?" says St. Peter incredulously. "Easter is the Christian holiday that coincides with the Jewish celebration of Passover. Jesus and his disciples were eating at the last supper and Jesus was later deceived and turned over to the Romans by one of his disciples. The Romans took him to be crucified and he was stabbed in the side, made to wear a crown of thorns, and was hung on a cross with nails through his hands. He was buried in a nearby cave which was sealed off by a large boulder." St. Peter smiles broadly with delight. Then he continues, "Every year the boulder is moved aside so that Jesus can come out ... and, if he sees his shadow, there will be six more weeks of winter."

Wishing you all the blessings and graces of the Easter Season! May the Lord Jesus Christ keep rising in our lives and transforming us into his ardent disciples!

Your Friend and Pastor,

Fr. Charles Puthota