

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

February 26, 2023



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Season of Lent: This special season started with a bang on Ash Wednesday, when Catholics come out into the church in big numbers. We had our foreheads marked with the words, "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return." It's pretty strong language; a wake-up call. The meaning of the ashes accompanied with this reminder is 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, really owned anything, we should 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 and blessings in this world, which we need to be responsible stewards of. In other words, 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 better, it is then we 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 things money cannot buy!

Archdiocesan Annual Appeal (AAA): It's final week of our concerted month-long campaign. Our goal is \$37,462. Donation of 1.33% would be \$500. Please give as early and as generously as possible. We are starting the fourth and final week of the month-long drive of AAA. You may have seen the names of all the donors so far for AAA 2023 in the bulletin. We are making steady progress, but without your help we cannot accomplish it. Last week at all the Masses, after the homily, Antonia and Carol Valasco spoke reminding us of the need for AAA in our support for the Archdiocesan ministries. I thank them for their generosity in spending time for the parish and the Archdiocese and for sharing their thoughts on AAA with the whole parish. I encourage and urge everyone to participate in AAA so that we can make a success of this project once again. Please keep in mind that even during the pandemic, our parish reached the goal and even exceeded it. Please give 1.33% (\$500), if possible. As I said before, if everyone could think about a minimum AAA donation of \$100 to \$200, it would be fantastic! Any excess funds will be returned to us and we could use them for our parish projects, especially toward the maintenance of the buildings.

Word of God: Temptation & Sin: In the first reading from Genesis this First Sunday of Lent, we are told how the first parents were tempted and succumbed to sin. In the gospel, Jesus is tempted, but he stands his ground and overcomes temptations. In the second reading from the Letter to the Romans, Paul contrasts the first Adam with the second Adam, Jesus, on the basis of sin and grace. Jesus is faithful to his Father and to all of us. This Lenten season of reappraisal and renewal, the Word of God challenges us to look at the many situations, where we are being led astray by all sorts of enticements, allurements, and attractions. While none of us is perfect, we are invited to keep making the effort at holiness and wholeness. Awareness of our situation would be a big part of this process. If we can see deeply and inwardly, we would awaken to God's love and our sinfulness. With God's grace we shall be purified, redeemed, anointed, and empowered for the way to be human and Christian according to the mind and heart of Christ. This is what Lent is all about.

Quotable Quote: "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched--they must be felt with the heart."---Helen Keller.

A Story to Ponder: A young author once told Mark Twain that he was losing confidence in his ability to write. "Did you ever get that feeling yourself?" he asked. "Yes," said Twain. "Once, after I had been writing for nearly fifteen years, it suddenly struck me that I did not possess the slightest talent for writing." "What did you do then? Did you give up writing?" "How could I? By then I was already famous."

Humor: 1. God in a parking lot: A man is struggling to find a parking space. "Lord," he prays. "I can't stand this. If you open a space up for me, I swear I'll give up the drink and go to mass every Sunday." Suddenly, the clouds part and the sun shines on an empty parking spot. Without hesitation, the man says: "Never mind, I found one!" 2. Follow the light: A guy walks into a dentist's office and says, "I think I'm a moth." The dentist replies, "You shouldn't be here. You should be seeing a psychiatrist..." The guy replies, "I am seeing a psychiatrist." The dentist says, "Well then what are you doing here?" And the guy says, "Your light was on."

Wishing you a Lenten season full of fresh, new perspectives on God and the world, on life and love,

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota