

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

April 16, 2023



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

The Meaning of Easter Season: Jesus Christ is alive and active in our lives. This is what Easter simply means. It's true he was killed in a horrible way---crucified on a cross. But on the third day, even as he had promised, he rose from the dead. His Father who had let his own son suffer and die, did not abandon him, but raised him to new life. Our lives are understood in the light of the resurrection of Christ. All our predicaments and perils do not have the power to destroy us, even though it might at times appear that way. Thanks to the risen Christ, we shall overcome. We shall have hope. We shall receive the power and strength. We can experience the process of dying and rising to a new life. What God has done throughout the history of the human race and what God has done through the Salvation History spelled out in the Bible--all this we can view from the most efficacious vantage point of the resurrection of Jesus. As someone has said: "The gospels do not explain the resurrection of Jesus; the resurrection explains the gospels." If we can keep dying to self and our unreasonable and uncharitable convictions, prejudices, preconceived notions, and conditioned-predetermined ways of living our lives, and rising to life-giving, loving, self-giving ways, then the dynamics of Easter is really at work in our lives. We are an Easter people! Let the spirit of Easter make a difference in our lives.

Easter Quotes: "I believe in Christ like I believe in the sun – not because I can see it, but by it, I can see everything else." – C.S. Lewis. "We proclaim the resurrection of Christ when his light illuminates the dark moments of our existence." – Pope Francis. "Unless there is Good Friday in your life, there can be no Easter Sunday." – Fulton J. Sheen. "Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people and hallelujah is our song." – Pope John Paul II. "Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime." – Martin Luther. "Christ has not only spoken to us by his life but has also spoken for us by his death." – Soren Kierkegaard. "The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ came to do three things. He came to have my past forgiven, you get a purpose for living, and a home in Heaven." – Rick Warren.

Archdiocesan Annual Appeal (AAA)---We've Reached the Goal---Congratulations and Thanks! Please see the names of donors on the last page of the bulletin. Those who are still considering, please give; the surplus gets returned to our parish for our own parish ministries and services. In the time span of nine weeks, we have made the goal of \$37,462. We started 2023 AAA campaign on February 5 and arrived at our goal on Easter Sunday April 9. I would like to thank all those who donated generously toward AAA 2023. Also, special thanks to all those who donated 1.33% (\$500 and more) so thoughtfully and kindly, which made it easier for us to reach our goal swiftly. As you well know, it is not pleasant to do this campaign the whole year through with endless requests and reminders. Now that we have completed this goal quickly within nine weeks, you shall not hear from me about it again except to thank the donors and celebrate this achievement. I shall be in touch with you about the luncheon, as promised, for those who have donated 1.33% or more as a way of expressing my deep gratitude.

Word of God: During the season of Easter, we'll be reading the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles authored by Luke. This book is one of my favorites in the whole Bible. The Acts of the Apostles tells the story of what happened after Jesus ascended to heaven, about how the Spirit of Christ anointed and empowered the apostles to preach and practice the resurrection faith fearlessly and courageously. In today's first reading, we see that the early Christians live a communal life, sharing everything they had. That spirit of sharing our lives and resources is something the world is desperately in need of. We have adequate resources in the world for all to enjoy the basic necessities, only not enough of the spirit of generosity. The gospel tells the story of the "doubting Thomas." He seeks rational, scientific proof to put his faith in the risen Christ. He represents the modern person looking for empirical evidence, but faith goes beyond such proofs, even as love does. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen." The risen Christ shepherds us from the rational to the realm of faith in God's love and presence. As we all know, the deepest and most precious things in life are things we cannot see and touch. Are we ready for the faith the Easter Lord wants us to profess and practice?

Divine Mercy Sunday: The Second Sunday of Easter is designated as Divine Mercy Sunday. The Polish Saint Faustina's visions about Jesus' appearances to her have led to this special devotion. Let the prayer "Jesus, I trust in You" and the deep conviction of God's infinite love and mercy revealed in Jesus guide us through the journey of life as we go about fulfilling God's plan and purpose for our lives.

A Story to Ponder: Give Your Best to Others: A farmer, whose corn always took the first prize at the State Fair, had the habit of sharing his best corn seed with all the farmers in the neighborhood. When asked why, he said, "It is really a matter of self-interest. The wind picks up the pollen and carries it from field to field. So, if my neighbors grow inferior corn the cross-pollination brings down the quality of my own corn. That is why I am concerned that they plant only the very best." *All that you give to others you are giving to yourself.*

Easter Joke: Conversation between Joseph of Arimathea and a friend: Friend: "Joseph, I don't understand. You're the richest man in the region; you have made this brand new tomb for yourself and your family; and, you're going to give it away to bury Jesus?" Joseph: "It's just for the weekend!"

Withing you and your families a Christ-filled Easter Season,

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota