

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

May 7, 2023



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Easter Mystique: We are journeying with the Risen Christ this Easter season, a season with its own special mystique. It comes from the presence of Christ in our lives. As happened with the disciples of Emmaus, we may not recognize him as he walks and talks with us in our relationships, work, play, love, struggles, heartache, uncertainties, ambiguities, but as sure as the dawn after night, Christ is present in all that we are and do in life. He is not indifferent to our situations. He insists on inserting himself into the thick of our lives. We cannot get rid of him that easily! He speaks to us and interprets our life in terms of faith. We may not even be aware of how his presence and power are impacting our lives. He is Emmanuel, God with-us. He also promises and challenges us by his assurance: "I'll be with you always, even to the end of time." The simple Easter message is: no matter what, he is with us always, forever and ever, Amen!

Easter Quotes: "Where man sees but withered leaves, God sees sweet flowers growing." — Albert Laighton. "The great gift of Easter is hope - Christian hope which makes us have that confidence in God, in his ultimate triumph, and in his goodness and love, which nothing can shake." — Basil C. Hume.

May, A Month Dedicated to Blessed Virgin Mary: Devotion to Mary is an important part of the Catholic identity. As our mother she is an example of a committed "Yes" to the will of God. Because of the devotion to her many people ask her for help in the most difficult moments of their life as any child does with her/his mother. The link between Mary and the month of May became popular among the members of the Jesuit Order---by 1700 it had a firm hold among their students at the Roman College and a short time later it was publicly celebrated in the famous Gesu Church in Rome. From there it spread to the rest of the Church. The pious practice of honoring Mary during the month of May has been especially promoted by the Popes. Pius XII made frequent reference to it and in his great Encyclical of 1947 on the Sacred Liturgy *Mediator Dei*. Marian devotions in May include the singing of Marian hymns, reading the sacred scriptures associated with Our Lady and praying the rosary. If possible, we could recite the Rosary everyday of the month of May. Many people have told me over the past years that it is a helpful and effective prayer also in bed before falling asleep as it steers us away from our worries and anxieties and ushers in a peaceful sleep.

Word of God: In the Gospel reading, one of the funeral favorites, Jesus says memorably about himself: "I am the way and the truth and the life." He asks Phillip: "Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me?" This question Jesus might well be asking each of us. We have a vague sense of being with Jesus, but do we really know him? Have we experienced him personally? Because of that personal, intimate knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, could he be leading us to be certain kind of persons and do certain acts of love and kindness to others? In the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, the infant Christian community is inspired by the Spirit of Christ to deal with a practical situation of injustice. The Hebrew-speaking widows are fed while the Greek-speaking widows are being neglected. It was a situation of discrimination and partiality. The Church, with the personal knowledge of the Risen Christ, discerns the way to move forward and decide how to right the wrong. The create new structures to combat discrimination and to continue to proclaim the Word and feed the poor. That the widows were being fed shows that even from the earliest of times, the Church was engaged in feeding the poor and the vulnerable in society. This Easter season, let our personal knowledge of Jesus Christ lead us to discernment about how to proclaim the good news and serve others, especially those in need.

A Prayer: Some years ago, I had printed a personal prayer of mine in a parish bulletin, which seemed to give solace and guidance to others. I was surprised it struck a chord among people. It was a prayer that was dear to Nita Ricotta and Margaret Collins, close friends of mine who recently passed away in their late eighties. Here is the simple prayer: **"Jesus, come meet me where I'm at this juncture of my life. Speak to me to my present needs. Heal me as I carry the burdens of my illnesses. Save me from myself and my loneliness and sadness. Touch me with your grace. Make my humdrum life shine with your love."**

A Story to Ponder: A family of refugees was very favorably impressed with America, especially the six-year-old daughter who rapidly adopted the view that everything American was not only the best but also perfect. One day a neighbor told her she was going to have a baby, so little Mary marched home and demanded to know why she couldn't have a little baby brother too. Her mother decided to introduce her to the facts of life right there and, among other things, explained that it took about nine months for a baby to arrive. "Nine months!" exclaimed Mary indignantly. "But mother, aren't you forgetting that this is America?"

Humor: 1. "They say when you die you see bright light at the end of a tunnel," notes comedian Ed Marques. "I think my father will see the light, then flip it off to save electricity." 2. A man asked an acquaintance how his wife was; then, suddenly remembering that she had died, he blurted out, "Still in the same cemetery?" 3. Overheard: "My greatest fear is that I'll be standing behind Mother Teresa in the Final Judgment line and I'll hear God tell her, 'You know, you should have done more.'"

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota