

# From the Pastor's Desktop

## A Message from Father Charles Puthota

August 13, 2023



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

**Archdiocesan Annual Appeal (AAA) Thank-You Luncheon on August 6:** Last Sunday, I had invited all those who had donated 1.33% to a luncheon at Basque Cultural Center. It was to thank the donors for their generous donation and participation in support of the ministries and mission of the Archdiocese. Thank you for attending the luncheon. There was a warm and cordial spirit of friendship and joy and gratitude at the luncheon. I had the opportunity to lead the prayer before meal and later to thank the gathering for their engagement in the life of the parish and the Archdiocese. Many thanks, again, and please do continue to be active at St. Elizabeth Parish and give your time, talent and treasure for God's glory and the service of God's people.

**Tuesday, August 15: Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary:** A Holy Day of Obligation. Masses at 8:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

**My Ordination Anniversary:** I was ordained on August 19, 1989. That was 34 years ago! At my same Ordination Mass itself, I blessed the marriage of my brother and baptized a niece and a nephew. As the years go by, I realize more clearly that priesthood is a precious gift and a continuous task. It's an everyday calling to respond to God's grace and serve the people of God. Please keep me in your prayers. I'd like to thank you, St. Elizabeth parishioners, for your prayers, inspiration, and support. The Collect (Opening Prayer) for the Ordination Anniversary Mass given in the Roman Missal (page 1100) captures my sentiment and spirit: **"Holy Father, who, by no merit of my own, chose me for communion with the eternal priesthood of your Christ and for the ministry of your church, grant that I may be an ardent yet gentle preacher of the Gospel and a faithful steward of your mysteries."**

**Word of God ---19<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time: God's Presence in Our Lives:** From 1 Kings in the first reading, we read this: "A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the Lord – but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake – but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake there was fire – but the Lord was not in the fire. After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound." God's presence is to be discerned in the small, whispering sound! Albert Einstein once said: "God is subtle." It takes careful and quiet seeing and perceiving of God in our lives. There may be a lot of noise and turmoil in our lives and it may become very difficult to have a sense of God's presence. It takes great courage and wisdom to seek quiet moments and to retreat from the frontlines of life's battles in order to feel God's closeness in our lives. That's why going to Mass even on weekdays for those possible (especially for the retired persons) may be a source of that assurance of God's presence. The weekend Mass for all of us has the potential to provide that sense of God in our lives. In the gospel, Jesus walks on the water. He breezes into the time and space of the disciples, but they are afraid, thinking it's a ghost. But Jesus assures: "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter tries to walk on the water but he needs more faith, as we all do. The presence of God in Jesus is the most beautiful and precious gift in our life. With him, no matter what our troubles/situations/fears/anxieties are, we will be able to face them.

**California Academy of Sciences:** I recently visited a few times the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco. When you have the time, check out this intellectually stimulating place that can also be full of fun. In light of what we see there, our faith could lead us to a certain kind of reflection and action. When you are there, check out the Aquarium, Planetarium, the Rain Forest, and the Natural History Museum. The "Living Roof" is also a lot of fun to visit. One of the advantages of visiting a place like this would be for us to come to appreciate more deeply God's creation and to come to love it more and to resolve to protect and preserve "our common home." Pope Francis' vision of "Laudato Si" would become more urgent and inspirational. "Earth's crammed with heaven and every common bush afire with God. But only he who sees, takes off his shoes; the rest sit around it and pluck blackberries." --- Elizabeth Barret Browning.

**A Story to Ponder:** No one knows what became of Kakua after he left the Emperor's presence. Here is the story: Kakua was the first Japanese to study Zen in China. He had little use for travelling, for he took his meditation seriously. Whenever people found him out and invited him to preach, he would say a word or two and escape to another part of the forest where he would not be disturbed. On his return to Japan the Emperor heard of him and commanded him to preach at court. Kakua stood silent and helpless before the King. Then he pulled out a flute from the folds of his robe, played one short note on it, bowed profoundly to the King and disappeared.

**Quotable Quotes on Love:** "The greatest happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved." - Victor Hugo. "Love makes your soul crawl out from its hiding place." - Zora Neale Hurston. "Love's greatest gift is its ability to make everything it touches sacred." - Barbara de Angelis. "You yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection." - Buddha. "Life without love is like a tree without blossoms or fruit." - Khalil Gibran.

**Humor:** A Benedictine, a Franciscan, a Dominican, and a Jesuit are walking down the road when the Holy family appears before them. The Benedictine falls to his knees and begins chanting the praises of Christ. The Franciscan immediately goes to Mary and asks if he can help with the baby or if there is anything they need. The Dominican adores the mystery of the Incarnation. The Jesuit walks over to Joseph, casually puts his arm around his shoulders, and says, "So, have you thought about where to send the boy to school?"

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota