

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

February 18, 2024



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Musings on the Season of Lent: This sacred season started on a good note on Ash Wednesday. At St. Elizabeth parish, we celebrated two well-attended Masses that day: at 8:30 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. Crosses of ashes were traced on our foreheads with the words, "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return." Dust and death are strong reminders on Ash Wednesday. An intense language indeed! And a wake-up call! This external ritual of ashes has a profound inner meaning. We are called to wear them on our hearts as God is calling us to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. The ashes and the words about our returning to dust are reminders that our lives in this world are not permanent. In fact, we do not own anything in the world, even though we have an illusion of it. If we really owned anything, we would be able to take it into the next world. This season of Lent, 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 a bit more clearly, when we awaken to the reality of life, it is then we will 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. As we are engaged in all sorts of spiritual activities, devotions, and rituals this season, let all these efforts converge on a deepening and maturing relationship with God in Jesus Christ---and others---where love and humility will shine forth. Happy hunting this season of Lent---for all the blessings money cannot buy!

Lenten Retreat on Saturday March 02: You are most welcome to sign up for this retreat that I'll be preaching on Saturday, March 02. Theme: Spirituality and Some Practices. It will start with the 8:30 a.m. Mass followed by light breakfast and coffee; then I'll give three sessions of reflections. It will all end with a catered lunch. Registration fee: \$15. Contact the sacristans or parish office.

The Word of God this First Sunday of Lent: Jesus in Mark's gospel goes into the desert for forty days. He is tempted by the evil one. He lives among wild beasts and is ministered to by the angels. Then he comes into his public ministry proclaiming: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." Lent is the time of fulfillment. It simply means, "It's about time we realized that we are being encountered by Jesus." The Kingdom of God is here and now. God's rule over our lives is happening right now. Will we let him take control of our lives to lead and guide us? Or are we going to go on our own ways that are contrary to God, love, and the deepest and greatest longings of our life? Are we going to go on making poor choices that bring sadness and grief or are we going to hear Jesus speaking clearly and creatively in the midst of all our preoccupations? Repentance is not a sad thing, but a happy form of growth and development. It is to forget the harmful things we do to ourselves and others.

Parish Consultors Meeting (PCM): On Tuesday February 13, after the 8:30 a.m. Mass, 22 of us met to share our experiences in the various ministries and organizations of the parish. It was an occasion also for me to have a pulse on the life of the parish and to explore together with those actively involved about what more we could do for God and his people in our parish. I salute all those who actively and energetically contribute to the faith and service in our faith community. The meeting ended with a delicious lunch. Thank you to all who set up this meeting and made all the arrangements and purchases, especially Phil McCarthy and Dave Gemignani.

Archdiocesan Annual Appeal (AAA) 2024: Week III: Archbishop's Annual Appeal (AAA): We are beginning the third week of the month-long drive to raise \$32,089 toward our support for the Archdiocese. Please see the donors' names in the bulletin on the last page. If you could give 1.5%, which is \$500, it would be highly helpful in making our goal quickly. Please give whatever you can generously and quickly.

Stations of the Cross on Fridays in Lent: Immediately following the 8:30 a.m. Mass on Fridays in Lent, there will be Stations of the Cross. Please come and join to walk spiritually with Jesus as he carries the cross to his crucifixion.

Devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help and Benediction: The devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help will continue with adoration and benediction on all Wednesdays throughout the year immediately following the 8:30 a.m. Mass. Please come join!

Quotable Quote: "You be the change you wish to see in the world" --- Mahatma Gandhi.

A Story to Ponder: 1. A conductor was rehearsing with his orchestra and said to the trumpet player, "I think this part calls for a more Wagnerian approach, if you get what I mean, something more assertive, so to speak, more accentuated, with more body, more depth, more..." The trumpet player interrupted. "Do you want it louder, sir?" All that the poor conductor could say was. "Yes, that's what I mean!"

Humor: 1. Doctor: Mr. Erickson, you are in good health. You should live to be 90. Mr. Erickson: I'm 91! Doctor: See, what did I tell you? 2. A 75-year-old woman in a retirement home was admiring a 90-year-old-man. "Why do you keep looking at me so much?" asked the man. "Well," she responded, "you look just like my third husband." "How many husbands have you had?" "Two." 3. You can tell you're getting older when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it.

Your Friend and Pastor,

Fr. Charles Puthota