

# From the Pastor's Desktop

## A Message from Father Charles Puthota

March 10, 2024



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

**Archdiocesan Annual Appeal (AAA) 2024:** The goal is \$32,089. So far, you have donated \$21,153.00. The balance we need to raise is: \$10,936.00. If it is possible, can you consider giving 1.5% of the amount, which is \$500? Please give early and generously. Please see the names of donors in the bulletin. We completed last week a month-long, concerted campaign for AAA. Our parish and the Archdiocese are intimately linked in mission and ministry. Please give from the abundance of your hearts in gratitude for all the blessings we have received and as a way of standing with the Archdiocese that serves our own parish well through their many services. The Archdiocese is called to extend their ministries in various capacities to the three counties of San Francisco, Marin, and San Mateo.

**Quotes on Giving:** “We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.” — Winston Churchill. “No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.” — Charles Dickens. “You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.” — Amy Carmichael. “For it is in giving that we receive.” — St. Francis of Assisi.

**A Lenten Prayer for love by the renowned theologian Karl Rahner, SJ:** “God of My Life, only in love can I find you, my God. In love the gates of my soul spring open, allowing me to breathe a new air of freedom and forget my own petty self. In love my whole being streams forth out of the rigid confines of narrowness and anxious self-assertion, which makes me a prisoner of my own poverty and emptiness. In love all the powers of my soul flow out toward you, wanting never more to return, but to lose themselves completely in you, since by your love you are the inmost center of my heart, closer to me than I am to myself. But when I love you, when I manage to break out of the narrow circle of self and leave behind the restless agony of unanswered questions, when my blinded eyes no longer look merely from afar and from the outside upon your unapproachable brightness, and much more when you yourself, O Incomprehensible One, have become through love the inmost center of my life, then I can bury myself entirely in you, O mysterious God, and with myself all my questions.”

**Lenten Retreat Last Week:** On Saturday March 02, I preached a retreat on the theme of “Spirituality: Some Insights and Practices.” It was attended by 70 people. Some had come from other parishes. After the 8:30 a.m. Mass, which was attended by the retreat participants, we went down to Cantwell Hall for breakfast and coffee. I gave three sessions, each of which started and ended with a hymn. Several of those who attended have let me know that they found the reflections on the Catholic spirituality helpful and inspirational. For example, the Catholic spirituality is sacramental, which means that everything (persons, events, nature, the course of history) is imbued with God’s hidden presence and everything is sacred. This stems from the grace of God becoming

one with us, the mystery of the Incarnation. The retreat ended with a delicious lunch catered by Ulisses Catering. It was a joyful event, with a perceptible upbeat mood. I think it is a blessing for people to come together and enjoy friendships as we are able to reflect on certain themes connected with the season of Lent. I'd like to express my deep gratitude to Phil McCarthy, David Gemignani, Luz Bansuelo, Belma Enriquez and their team for making excellent arrangements and their dedicated work. Our next retreat will be in Advent. Stay tuned!

**Word of God, Fourth Sunday of Lent:** The gospel from John this Sunday contains one of the most consoling passages in the whole Bible. This could indeed be the summary of the whole Bible and our Christian life. This is called "the gospel within the gospel." It is this: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (John 3: 16-17). This passage is worth memorizing. Jesus comes into the world because God loves the whole world. Does God really love the world? Yes, yes, yes. That's why we have to love the world too. If we love the world as Jesus loves it, then we will go about making this world a better place. God is not there to condemn the world, but to love it and save it. That's why Jesus is willing to die for us. The call of life is to turn away from evil, greed, sin, selfishness and everything that does not belong to God ---and turn toward the powers of love, goodness, compassion, and kindness. Lent is a good time to think about such things.

**Pilgrimage to Greece and Medjugorje: In the Footsteps of St. Paul with Greek Isles Cruise, October 04 - 18, 2024:** I'll be spiritual director of this pilgrimage. It includes stops at Thessaloniki, Phillippi, Kavala, Kalambaka, Delphi, Corinth, Athens, Kusadasi, Ephesus (Mary's House), Patmos, Santorini, Medjugorje. If you are interested in joining, you are most welcome. Check out [www.206tours.com/cms/frputhota](http://www.206tours.com/cms/frputhota) . For pricing and other information, please call Jon or Chris at 206 Tours (pilgrimage company) at 800-206-8687.

**Quotable Quote:** "You are never too old to set a new goal or to dream a new dream." – C.S. Lewis

**Pope John the 23rd Jokes:** 1. Not long after he was elected pope, Pope John (now a saint) was walking in the streets of Rome. A woman passed him and said to her friend, "My God, he's so fat!" Overhearing what she said, he turned around and replied, "Madame, I trust you understand that the papal conclave is not exactly a beauty contest." 2. When he went to visit a friend at the nearby Hospital of the Holy Spirit in the evening, the nun answering the door said: "Holy Father, I'm the mother superior of the Holy Spirit." He replied: "Lucky you! What a job! I'm just the 'servant of the servants of God.'"

**Be well! Stay healthy! May the present journey of Lent help bring us purified and renewed to the mysteries of the Holy Week!**

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota