

# From the Pastor's Desktop

## A Message from Father Charles Puthota

April 7, 2024



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

**Divine Mercy Sunday:** A few years ago, I had the privilege of visiting Poland among some other European countries. While there, along with places connected with Saint John Paul II and the heartbreaking concentration camp in Auschwitz, I visited the shrines of the Divine Mercy devotion and Saint Faustina Kowalska and celebrated Masses at those holy places. God is loving and merciful. He is merciful because he is loving. The essence and nature of God is that he is love and mercy. "He is slow to anger and rich in kindness." This Sunday is Divine Mercy Sunday. To be merciful is God's identity and his constant preoccupation. In Jesus Christ God's mercy has been given to us in astonishing and incredible ways. We can have new beginnings because of God's love and mercy. We can turn our lives around because God is never tired of showing us mercy. We are created for love by love because of love. When we go against love, we actually go against ourselves. May God's mercy shine on us always so that we can all together practice mercy toward one another.

**Easter Season:** Hope you are enjoying the spiritual blessings and graces of the Easter season. Jesus Christ is alive and active in our lives. That is what Easter simply means. It's true he was killed in a horrible way and 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 interpreted 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. The entire Bible in terms of the salvation history and all that God has done throughout the history of the human race can be viewed 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 to our unreasonable and uncharitable convictions, prejudices, preconceived notions, and conditioned and predetermined ways of living our lives---and keep rising to loving, selfless ways, then the dynamics of Easter are really at work in our lives. We are an Easter people! Let the spirit of Easter make a difference in our lives.

**Easter Quotes:** "He has risen. This is the heart of our faith. Mary was a silent witness of all these events. Let us ask her to help us also to receive the fullness of this Easter message." — St. John Paul II. "The resurrection gives my life meaning and direction and the opportunity to start over no matter what my circumstances." - *Robert Flatt*. "Easter is the demonstration of God that life is essentially spiritual and timeless." - *Charles M. Crowe*. "Let the resurrection joy lift us from loneliness and weakness and despair to strength and beauty and happiness." - *Floyd W. Tomkins*

**The Word of God, the Second Sunday of Easter:** During the season of Easter, we'll be reading the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles. This book is one of my favorites in the whole Bible. The Acts of the Apostles tells the story of what happened after Jesus was 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 read about how the earliest Christians shared everything by putting everything they owned at the service of others. "There was no needy person among them...." Sharing and caring are at the heart of Christianity. The gospel tells the story of the "doubting Thomas." He seeks rational, scientific proof as the basis for 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?

**Thank You:** Our Easter celebrations went very well. Thank you to all those who attended our services. During the Holy Week and the Easter celebrations, there were many generous and kind volunteers who gave so much of their time and talents. To all the volunteers who worked together to make the celebrations beautiful and prayerful, my deep gratitude! All those who decorated, all those who set up everything, all those who sang in our choirs, all those who ensured safety and security for everyone---to all of you my thanks on behalf of the whole parish community. As I have said before, the extent of generosity of volunteers at our parish is amazing and impressive. Thank you!

**Archdiocesan Annual Appeal (AAA) 2024, We reached the goal:** The goal was \$32,089. We reached the goal in seven weeks (February 4 through March 17). Congratulations and thank you! Some of you went the extra mile to donate 1.5% and more, which is \$500 and more. Thank you! Please see the names of donors in the bulletin. Those of you who are still thinking of giving, please do because any donations beyond the goal of \$32,089 will be returned to our parish so we could continue to do God's work.

**A Humorous Story to Ponder:** A fire broke out in a house in which a man was fast asleep. They tried to carry him out through the window. No way. They tried to carry him out through the door. No way. He was just too huge and heavy. They were pretty desperate till someone suggested: "Wake him up, then he'll get out by himself." (Wake up! Grow up! Wake up to the presence of the Easter Christ!)

**Wishing you and your families all the joys, beauties, and blessings of the Easter season! May we let the Risen Christ do the eastering work in us, our families, and the world!**

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota