

# From the Pastor's Desktop

## A Message from Father Charles Puthota

April 14, 2024



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

**Easter Season:** What does Easter mean to us? Obviously, it is not just a one-day celebration. It is a season. What is more, it is a way of looking at things. It's not a way of looking at certain things but a certain way of looking at everything. Because of Jesus' resurrection, we can live our present lives with abiding hope and a sense of freedom. Jesus' dying and rising is at work in our lives so that we can keep dying and rising. Changing our direction in life is a big part of the Easter season.

The early Christians embraced the change of life. When the apostles preached, who had themselves been transformed, the people who heard them were transformed. The Holy Spirit brought about changes unimaginable. The apostles who had been hiding for fear of the authorities were transformed into fearless and ardent and courageous witnesses of the Risen Christ. They were ready to do anything for the Lord. They would rather obey God than the human authority. Nothing could keep them down. The Spirit of Christ drove them in directions they never thought was possible. They set the world on fire with their Word, Sacrament (breaking of the bread), Witness, and Service.

We too may feel helpless about our patterns of behavior or cycles of sin, but the Risen Christ can breathe his Spirit on us and blow away our timidity and doubts, our helplessness and insecurities. The spiritual effects of Jesus' resurrection may be felt and experienced in our daily lives if we but allow the Easter grace to take hold of our lives. What about those dear departed ones from our families and circles of friends? Aren't they all well because of the Risen Christ? Don't they all luxuriate in the endless joy and peace of Easter? Easter, therefore, is profound both for the living and the dead. We cannot view the mysteries of life and death without the vantage point of the Easter mystery.

**Easter Quotes:** Janine Di Giovanni: "Easter is meant to be a symbol of hope, renewal and new life." Reba McEntire: "Easter is very important to me. It's a second chance." Martin Luther: "Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime." Victor Hugo: "Dawn and resurrection are synonymous. The reappearance of the light is the same as the survival of the soul." Pablo Neruda: "You can cut the flowers but you cannot keep spring from coming." Billy Graham: "The entire plan for the future has its key in the resurrection." Pope John Paul II: "Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people and Hallelujah is our song."

**Word of God, Third Sunday of Easter:** Luke, author of both the Acts of the Apostles and the gospel according to Luke, summarizes the life of Jesus as spoken by Peter in the first reading and in the gospel portrays the risen Jesus as dispelling the apostles' fears and showing himself as a living human person, not a ghost. "Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have." In both the readings, repentance and forgiveness of sins are to be preached to all nations. Our change of heart and God's forgiving love are at the center of our human and Christian life. This truth is proclaimed by John the Evangelist in a heartwarming manner in the second reading. He says that if we love God, we need to keep his commandments and avoid everything that is contrary to God's ways. "Whoever keeps his word, the love of God is truly perfected in him."

**Archdiocesan Annual Appeal:** Our goal was to raise \$32,089. The purpose was in 2024 to assist the Archdiocese in its mission to preach, teach, proclaim, and to engage in various spiritual, liturgical, sacramental, social, educational ministries. We reached our goal within a period of seven weeks (February 04 through March 17, 2024). Please see the names on the last page of the bulletin. Thanks to all those who donated generously. To those who have donated 1.5% and more (\$500 and more!), thank you for your generosity which made it easier and quicker for us to reach the goal of \$32,089. Those who are still considering to donate, please do think about it prayerfully. Any surplus amounts will be returned to our parish for the good work we at our parish are called to do.

**A Story to Ponder: Change the world by changing myself:** A holy man says this about himself; "I was a revolutionary when I was young and all my prayer to God was: 'Lord give me the energy to change the world.' As I approached middle age and realized that half my life was gone without my changing a single soul, I changed my prayer to: 'Lord, give me the grace to change all those who come in contact with me. Just my family and friends, and I shall be content.'" Now that I am an old man and my days are numbered, my one prayer is, 'Lord, give me the grace to change myself.' If I had prayed for this right from the start I should not have wasted my life."

**Humor:** One Easter Sunday the Reverend Jones announced to his congregation, "My good people, I have here in my hands three sermons..... A \$100 sermon that lasts five minutes A \$50 sermon that lasts fifteen minutes. And a \$20 sermon that lasts a full hour. Now, we'll take the collection and see which one I'll deliver."

**Wishing you and your families the glorious and joy-filled blessings of the Risen Christ in this Easter Season,**

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota