

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

March 09, 2025



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Continued Prayers for Pope Francis: Let's continue to join the Church all over the world in keeping our Universal Shepherd Pope Francis in our hearts and prayers. May the good Lord be close to him these days and grant him health and strength.

AAA 2025: Goal is \$36,292. This is Week IV of the month-long concerted campaign for reaching the goal of \$36,292. Please donate early and soon so that we can successfully complete this campaign quickly. See the list of AAA 2025 donors on the last page of the bulletin. So far we have raised \$14,305. During our month-long drive, the names of the donors for \$25 and above will be placed in the bulletin. If you have donated and your name is not on that list, please let the office know. If you are able to give 1.4% (\$500) or more, your names will have an asterisk on the donor list. If more are able to be in the 1.4% circle, it would make it easier for us to reach the goal quickly. I thank David Gemignani and Ron Borg for speaking on AAA 2025 at the last two weekend Masses, as they detailed their decades of connection to our parish and encouraged everyone to participate in this AAA campaign. Thank you, everyone, for all your collaboration and support!

Three Pillars of Lent: Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving. How can we practice these three important components of Lent? These three are related to God, ourselves, and others. Shall we make concrete plans this Lent about the practice of these three pillars. Please prayerfully consider the following Lenten traditions and invitations of the Church during Lent. Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving are the three pillars of the Lenten practices, which were highlighted in the Gospel reading on Ash Wednesday.

Stations of the Cross on Fridays in Lent: Immediately following the 8:30 a.m. Mass.

Attend Daily Mass in Lent: Would it be possible to join the daily Mass as something you could do as different from the other seasons? Think about it!

Divine Office at 8:00 a.m.: Also, if you can, join the Divine Office, the Morning Prayer, prayed in our Church of St. Elizabeth every day at 8:00 a.m.

Read Prayerfully Luke's Gospel in Lent as a Parish Spiritual Project: Shall each one of us take up the Gospel of Luke and read its 24 chapters during Lent? This we could do as a parish Lenten spiritual project.

Fast and Abstinence: The practice of fasting and abstinence is a form of spiritual discipline meant to promote penance, self-control, unity with Christ's suffering, and empathy with the sufferings of the poor and hungry. Fasting in the Church generally means reducing food intake. On prescribed fasting days, such as Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, Catholics aged 18 to 59 are required to eat only one full meal, with two smaller meals that together do not equal a full meal. Snacking between meals is not allowed, though water and medicine are permitted. Abstinence refers to refraining from eating meat as a form of sacrifice. Catholics 14 years and older must abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all Fridays of Lent. Purpose and Spiritual Meaning: These practices remind us of Jesus' sacrifice and help cultivate spiritual discipline. By denying physical comforts, we focus more on prayer, repentance, and charity. Fasting and abstinence are not merely rules but acts of devotion that deepen faith and strengthen the will to follow Christ's example. In the recent times, there have been suggestions that these spiritual practices may also help in taking care of the environment and the care for the planet earth.

Saturday March 22 is Lenten Retreat: I'll be preaching a Lenten Retreat on the theme of "Some Christian Spiritual Practices" on Saturday March 22. It will start with the 8:30 a.m. Mass and will end with lunch around 1:00 p.m. If you'd like to join this retreat, please register. Registration forms are available in the church and in the parish office. Registration fee: \$15.

Word of God: Temptations: The gospel from Luke this Sunday gives an account of the three temptations of Jesus. Perhaps we are so dazzled by Jesus' divinity that we don't even want to think that Jesus was tempted. So human was he. Is there anyone among us who has not been tempted? Someone has said: "Opportunity may knock only once, but temptation leans on the doorbell." It's indeed an inspiration for us that, in this temptation story, Jesus combats temptations armed with the Word of God. Lent again is a good time to read, reflect, meditate on the Word of God. I know a friend of mine who reads the Word of God (Mass readings) daily and faithfully. She tells me that she finds in it the strength and light she needs. Maybe, we could all cultivate the habit of reading the Word of God daily, as a Lenten practice.

Coffee Humor: 1. A guy walks into a coffee shop and asks the waitress: "How much is the coffee?" "Coffee is four dollars," the waitress says. "How much is a refill?" the man asks. "Free," says the waitress. "Then I'll take a refill!" the man responds. 2. A man went to his psychiatrist and said, "Every time I drink my coffee, I get a stabbing pain in my right eye." The psychiatrist said, "Well, have you tried taking the spoon out?" 3. Q: Where do birds go for coffee? A: On a NESTcafe.

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota