

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

March 30, 2025



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Archdiocesan Annual Appeal 2025 (AAA): Our goal is \$36,292. We have raised so far \$34,460. The balance to be raised is: \$1,832. Please give early and generously. See the names of all the donors on the last page of the bulletin. Thanks to all those who donated so far, including those who have generously donated \$500 and above (1.4%). Your donations in support of the Archdiocesan ministries and mission are much appreciated and gratefully received.

The Season of Lent: What shall we give up for Lent? Give up complaining — — focus on gratitude. Give up pessimism — — become an optimist. Give up harsh judgments — — think kindly thoughts. Give up worry — — trust Divine Providence. Give up discouragement — — be full of hope. Give up bitterness — — turn to forgiveness. Give up hatred — — return good for evil. Give up negativism — — be positive. Give up anger — — be more patient. Give up pettiness — — become mature. Give up gloom — — enjoy the beauty all around you. Give up jealousy — — pray for trust. Give up gossiping — — control your tongue. Give up sin — — turn to virtue. Give up giving up — — hang in there!

Parish Lenten Retreat: Last Saturday March 22, I preached the Lenten Retreat in our Cantwell Hall attended by 50 people. The themes of “The Emmaus Event as a Model of New Evangelization” and “Some Christian Spiritual Practices.” The retreat started with the 8:30 a.m. Mass followed by a light breakfast and three sessions and lunch. Each session started and ended with a hymn. There was plenty of joy and a spirit of friendships in the group. As we reflect on spiritual themes as part of our Lenten observances, we also benefit by the social aspect of people coming together, working together to get everything ready, celebrating friendships together, and eating together. The social aspect of the retreat is also spiritually uplifting and a big help in building up the parish community. I thank all those who worked so hard, especially David Gemignani, Phil McCarthy and their team (Richard & Marycon Padua, Beth Pasco, Belma Enriquez, and Lilia Crow) for their dedicated service.

Word of God: The Prodigal Son: The gospel this Fourth Sunday of Lent is about the Prodigal Son from Luke's gospel, chapter 15. It is an absolute and pure masterpiece. It presents the parable of the Prodigal Son, a powerful story of mercy, repentance, and love. Jesus is a brilliant storyteller, full of imagination, insight, and wisdom. Instead of merely stating that God is a merciful father, he gives that truth in parables, thus appealing to our whole being. As you know, there are two other parables in this chapter: the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin. The parable about the lost, prodigal son is all about sin and redemption, thanks to God's astonishing love and mercy. The younger son broke the heart of the father, but he changes his mind and returns to the father, begging to be accepted not as a son but a servant. But the father restores him to full sonship, symbolized in the ring, sandals, and the robe. He even orders a feast to celebrate his return.

The older son is angry and unhappy. The younger son stands for the sinners and tax-collectors. The older son represents the religious and civil authorities. This parable may be considered the gospel within the gospel. Such is the feeling of loss and heartbreak, but also the joy of returning to where we belong. We need to be where our God in Jesus Christ is. That's where we find our home. What are the ways in which I have strayed from my Father? What are the ways in which I am not in consonance with the teachings and values of Jesus? We need to recognize our being lost and make the wise decision of returning to where we belong, to "remain" in Jesus and in the Father. As the responsorial psalm says, let's "taste and see the goodness of the Lord." In the second reading, the same theme of our return to God is echoed: "Whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come."

Queen Wilhelmina Tulip Garden: The other day I visited this garden in Golden Gate Park with a couple of friends. In March, the place is bursting with tulips in full bloom. Thousands of colorful tulips adorn the garden beneath the historic Dutch Windmill. The garden was designed by Roy L. Hudson in 1962 and named for the long-reigning queen of the Netherlands who died the same year. The Dutch windmill was donated by Queen Wilhelmina herself in 1902. Attendance is free. If you have the time, do visit. Visiting places of beauty is refreshing and uplifting for the mind and heart.

Mark Twain Quotes: 1. If you don't read the newspaper, you're uninformed. If you read the newspaper, you're mis-informed. 2. Why waste your money looking up your family tree? Just go into politics and your opponent will do it for you. 3. Continuous improvement is better than delayed perfection.

Humor: 1. Some things are best left as they are: An enthusiastic young man who had just graduated as a plumber was taken to see Niagara Falls. He studied it for a minute, then said. "I think I can fix this. 2. "So this was your first flight. Were you scared?" "Well, to tell you the truth, I didn't dare put my full weight down on the seat."

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota