

# From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

February 22, 2026



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

**Season of Lent:** Lent begins with the stark ritual of Ash Wednesday. As ashes are traced upon our foreheads, we hear the humbling reminder: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." This moment is designed to shatter spiritual complacency, confronting us with the fragile, temporary nature of earthly life. It strips away the illusion of ownership; if we truly "owned" our lives or possessions, we could carry them beyond the grave. This realization shifts our identity from owners to stewards. We begin to see that our time, talents, and relationships are gifts entrusted to us by God, not assets we've earned. Lent provides a sacred clarity, urging us to evaluate how we love and what we prioritize. It asks us to distinguish between what endures and what merely distracts, moving our focus from outward appearances to the depth of the soul.

Far too often, we drift through life without discerning God's specific call. Through the Lenten pillars of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, we are invited to recalibrate. These practices are not mere routines but tools to deepen our connection with the Creator and our neighbors. This season, may we embrace humility and allow our hearts to be transformed, seeking the spiritual treasures that no money can buy and that death cannot take away.

**Word of God, First Sunday of Lent, Year A:** On this First Sunday of Lent, the Scriptures place before us the enduring reality of temptation and the hope of grace. The first reading from Genesis recalls how our first parents were tempted and gave in to sin, disrupting their relationship with God. In contrast, the Gospel presents Jesus facing temptation in the desert, yet remaining steadfast and faithful, choosing obedience to the Father. In the second reading, Saint Paul reflects on this contrast by setting the first Adam against the second Adam, Christ, showing how sin entered through one, but grace and new life come through the other.

Jesus' fidelity becomes a source of strength for us. Lent, as a season of reappraisal and renewal, invites us to examine the many ways we are drawn away from God by subtle enticements, attractions, and false promises. Though none of us is perfect, we are called to persist in the journey toward holiness and wholeness. Honest self-awareness is essential. When we look inward with sincerity, we become aware both of our sinfulness and of God's abiding love. Sustained by grace, we are purified, redeemed, and empowered to live more fully as human beings and Christians, shaped by the mind and heart of Christ. This is the true meaning of Lent.

**AAA 2026 Launch Weekend of Feb. 28-March 1:** The amount to raise is: \$34,588. This is in support of the Archdiocesan mission and ministries. If you could give 1.5%, which is \$500, it would be wonderful, but give whatever you can. My letter to the whole parish is on the way to you. Please give it all the support you can as I request you for the last time before my retirement. If we complete this campaign in the next six or seven weeks, I would like to schedule the AAA thank-you luncheon in April or May for the 1.5% Circle.

**Parish Lenten Retreat:** Saturday, February 28, starts at the 8:30 a.m. Mass. The theme: The Second Vatican Council. Please sign-up! The registration forms are in the church and the parish office. It includes breakfast and lunch. Registration fee is \$15.

**Stations of the Cross:** On Fridays in Lent, immediately following the 8:30 a.m. Mass.

**Quotable Quote:** "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched---they must be felt with the heart." ---Helen Keller.

**Wisdom Stories:** 1. The Long Road: A traveler complained that the road was long. A wise man replied, "You are counting the miles, not the moments." When the traveler began helping others along the way, the road felt shorter. Wisdom taught him that purpose lightens every journey. 2. The Silent Bell: A monastery bell rang only once a year. When asked why, the monk replied, "So we remember to listen." Silence teaches what constant noise cannot. 3. The Cracked Pot: A pot with a crack apologized for leaking. The water carrier smiled, pointing to flowers along the path. "Your flaw watered them," he said. What we call weakness often becomes a hidden gift.

**Memorare Prayer:** Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

**Humor:** 1. God in a parking lot: A man is struggling to find a parking space. "Lord," he prays. "I can't stand this. If you open a space up for me, I swear I'll give up the drink and go to mass every Sunday." Suddenly, the clouds part and the sun shines on an empty parking spot. Without hesitation, the man says: "Never mind, I found one!" 2. Follow the light: A guy walks into a dentist's office and says, "I think I'm a moth." The dentist replies, "You shouldn't be here. You should be seeing a psychiatrist..." The guy replies, "I am seeing a psychiatrist." The dentist says, "Well then what are you doing here?" And the guy says, "Your light was on."

Wishing you a Lenten season full of fresh, new perspectives on God and the world, on life and love,

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota