

# From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

March 29, 2026



Dear St. Elizabeth Parishioners ,

**Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord:** On Palm Sunday, we commemorate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Henry Hart Milman says: "Ride on, ride on in majesty! In lowly pomp ride on to die; O Christ, thy triumphs now begin, O'er captive death and conquered sin." Jesus' entry will turn into dark, sad days of excruciating suffering and horrible death. But it will all pale in the resplendent glory that will dawn on Easter. The profound Christian insight is that it's through the cross that we find our glory. Without suffering, there is no love, no redemption, no new life. Suffering is redemptive. Death is the doorway to resurrection. Let's look at the face of Jesus this Holy Week. Let's look into his tender eyes. Let's place our hand on the heart of Christ. Let's seek to enter his mind and heart and be close to his thoughts and feelings.

**Archdiocesan Annual Appeal (AAA):** Goal: \$34,588. 1.5% is \$500. We have just completed the month-long campaign. So far, we have raised \$29,837. The balance amount to raise is \$4,751. Please give early and generously. See the names of donors in the bulletin. Last week, Elizabeth Pasco spoke at the weekend Masses, encouraging us to give toward the mission of the Archdiocese. I thank all those who have donated to AAA so far. Also, special thanks to those who have given \$500 or more. We still need everyone to participate. Please keep in mind: what AAA stands for is nothing less than the mission of Jesus Christ carried out by the Archdiocese of San Francisco. As disciples and followers of Christ, it's not only our duty but also a joyful privilege to support the mission of Jesus. "Go to all the nations and preach the good news" is the mandate of Christ, which is being carried out in our Archdiocese. Our participation in AAA is a sign of our participation in this noble mission.

**Holy Week: St. Elizabeth Parish Holy Week Schedule is in the Mail:** I mailed last Tuesday, March 24, to each parishioner of St. Elizabeth Parish my Easter letter with the Holy Week schedule. Please see the schedule also in this weekend's bulletin. I invite you wholeheartedly to participate in the holy rituals and services of the Holy Week at our parish. Please do encourage your family and friends too to join us. Do keep in mind the opportunity for Confessions on Holy Saturday, April 4, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

**Lectio Divina (Divine Reading): A Practical Suggestion for the Holy Week:** Can you choose a passion narrative from one of the four gospels? Every gospel, toward the end, has the account of Jesus' suffering and death. You may go to a church or any other calm place or just your living room or kitchen. Turn the TV off. Sit quietly. Read slowly and prayerfully the passion narrative and be silent for a few minutes after reading it. It will only take about 20 minutes or so to do this. You will not regret spending some quality time on this simple form of prayer, Lectio Divina. If you feel inspired, speak to Jesus in your words. St. Ignatius of Loyola suggests in the "Spiritual Exercises" to stand before the cross and ask: "Lord, what have I done for you? What am I doing for you? What shall I do for you?"

**Morning Prayer:** During the Holy Week, I will be leading the Morning Prayer on Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday at 8:30 a.m. Do come and join this Prayer of the Church on these three special days.

**Donating Easter Lilies:** If you are able to donate Easter lilies, you are most welcome to do so. You can bring them to church during the morning Mass times (8:30 a.m. through 9:00 a.m.) or leave them at the Parish Office during office hours (Monday through Thursday 8:30 a.m. through 12:30 p.m.)

**Good Friday: A Day of Fasting and Abstinence.**

**Pontifical Good Friday Collection:** The offering taken up on Good Friday in all the Catholic parishes around the world is called the Pontifical Good Friday Collection. It goes toward supporting the holy shrines, parishes, and ministries in the Holy Land. The services include the liturgical, ecumenical, communications, educational (Terra Sancta Schools), pastoral, social, & charitable works, all of which in the Holy Land are entrusted to the care of the Franciscans. Christians in the Holy Land rely heavily on the help that comes to them from this worldwide collection. In the context of the war going on now, this collection is all the more urgent. Please donate generously.

**Via Dolorosa:** On my four visits to the Holy Land, one of the important things I did along with the pilgrims whom I accompanied was walking the sacred route, Via Dolorosa, which in Latin means “the way of suffering.” It’s in the Old City of Jerusalem. Tradition has long held that Jesus walked through this very path toward Calvary. This route winds through narrow streets with hundreds of shops on either side. That is why we had to wake up early in the morning by 4:30 a.m. and get to this place and start the Way of the Cross by 5:30 a.m. so that we could complete the prayers by the time the bazaar (shops) opened. Our Way of the Cross along this holy route ended with the Mass I celebrated at the Church of Holy Sepulcher, my most favorite church in the whole wide world because it is the church of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Lord.

**Good Friday Quote:** God had one son on earth without sin, but never one without suffering. – St. Augustine

I wish everyone at St. Elizabeth parish a reflective, prayerful, and grace-filled Holy Week,

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota