

Fr. Charles Puthota's Blog

March 7, 2021

From the Pastor's Desktop



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Archdiocesan Annual Appeal (AAA) 2021---Week III: Our goal is to raise \$40,000. We do not consider it a burden, but a privilege; not a problem, but an opportunity. The purpose is to assist the Archdiocese to do God's work that they are called to do. Even as our parish runs with the offerings you give from the "pews" weekend after weekend, the Archdiocese runs from the offerings that come from all the parishes in the Archdiocese through the AAA. Let's do this concerted AAA campaign for a month only. I know you would not appreciate my talking about AAA throughout the year. If everyone participates, this can be a success quickly. We are making progress, but we need more people to come onboard and help. Please see the names of all donors so far to AAA 2021 on the last page of the bulletin. I'd like to request everyone to participate. I thank Ron Borg who spoke persuasively last Sunday at the 10:00 a.m. Mass on AAA. Those of you who can, please consider donating 1%, which is \$400. Others, if you could donate a tax-deductible donation of at least \$100 to \$200, it would indeed be wonderful and highly helpful in our support for the Archdiocese. Please consider this donation prayerfully as part of our Lenten giving. I thank you humbly and joyfully for your participation and collaboration.

Some Thoughts on Lent: As we begin the third week of Lent, it would be fruitful for us and our families to continue reflecting on the meaning of Lent. Jesus lived in the desert for forty days, prayed to his Father, felt guided by the Spirit, did penance, overcame temptation, reflected on his life, drew up plans for his public ministry, and opened his mind and heart to the possibility of opposition and suffering leading up to his crucifixion. Jesus felt the need for this desert experience. We look upon Jesus and realize that we too need the "desert" experience---to think about what is going on in our lives and reorient ourselves towards God, family, and faith. Lent is that desert experience, a time for repentance and awareness of our mortality. Our fasting, abstinence, and devotions remind us of this season and the need for some practical decisions we need to make. For example, is my life rooted in love or selfishness? Is my life marked by giving or hoarding? Is my life guided by the Spirit of God or by my own desires and passions? Do I feel connected to Jesus or not? What are the values of Jesus that I practice or don't follow? Am I humble like Jesus or do I put myself at the center of the universe in adoration of myself? Do I understand that love means respect, kindness, forgiveness, and sharing? How am I connected with the faith community I call the Church? What do I do to others in terms of service and compassion? Do I keep in mind those who are fragile, vulnerable and on the margins of society and culture? We could examine ourselves along these lines and enter more deeply into the meaning and purpose of this Lenten season. Happy searching for meaning! Happy hunting for faith! Happy journeying to the heart of Christ!

New Sound System: As you know, our parish has contracted with Tony Belo for a brand new sound system in our church. He has been working on it. You may have noticed the tall new speakers installed on either side of the front of the church near the sanctuary area. With Tony's vast experience in installing sound systems in our Archdiocese as well as in Europe, I'm hoping that we are going to have an excellent sound system suitable for our acoustics needs. I shall keep you posted on the progress of this project.

Word of God: The gospel from John is about Jesus cleansing the temple. He drives out those who sell the animals and says, "Take these out of here, and stop making my Father's house a marketplace." Jesus is angry. His raw emotions are on display. He uses this as an opportunity to warn people about his own death and resurrection: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." Opposition to Jesus is hardening and he will move inexorably toward the cross. Our Lenten journey merges with the journey of Jesus himself toward the cross and resurrection. The cross and the accompanying humiliation and brutality may seem like failure in the eyes of the world, but in the eyes of God, through those terrible realities, new life will come to the world. By dying, Jesus saves us from sin, death, and evil. We are made free for love, joy, and service. The cross becomes a plus sign; a source of life, not death. This truth is expressed succinctly in the second reading: "... the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength."

Lenten Prayer: "O Lord, make this Lenten season different from the other ones. Let me find you again. Amen." --- Henry Nouwen.

Quotable Quote: "Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud."---Maya Angelou

Religious Humor: When the preacher approached the boy who was fishing in the park pond, he said, "Young man, do you know the parables?" "Yes sir," the lad quickly replied. "Which do you like best?" The boy looked up and, grinning, replied, "The one where everybody loafes and fishes."

Be well! Stay swell! Be healthy and happy! May this Lent bring peace to our hearts and harmony with others! May everyone and the whole creation enjoy God's blessings!

Your Friend & Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota