

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

March 17, 2024



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Archdiocesan Annual Appeal (AAA) 2024: We are making steady progress. Thank you for donating generously for the fourth consecutive year. Please see the names of donors in the bulletin. The total amount to raise is: \$32,089. So far you have donated \$29,548.00 The balance amount to reach is: \$2,541.00. If you are able to give 1.5%, which is \$500, it would be wonderful. Please do give whatever you can quickly and generously. This fundraiser, which is actually a faith-raiser, is to support the ministries of the Archdiocese, something that we are called to do each year.

Lent leading up to the Holy Week: We are in the fifth week of Lent. Next Sunday is Palm Sunday and the Sunday after that is Easter. This sacred season of spirituality and simplicity, of compassion and caring, of penance and perseverance, continues. Palm Sunday will usher in the Holy Week. It's the most sacred time in the liturgical calendar. The suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus have close parallels to our life, as we make sense of our human condition. May this week be a special time of closeness to God and to one another. As far as possible, let's pause from our hectic lives and preoccupations, from our anxiety and anguish, and look up at the cross of Christ, that symbol of shame and death, which has become the life-giving source for everyone for all time. I invite everyone to participate in the paschal mysteries celebrated at our parish. Please see the schedule in my Easter letter to the whole parish, which is on the way, and also in the bulletin. Let's get ready psychologically and spiritually for the Holy Week.

Happy St. Patrick's Day, March 17: Traditionally we celebrate the Feast of St. Patrick on March 17, though this year the Sunday liturgy takes precedence over feast day liturgy. Happy St. Patrick's Day! Here's the famous prayer of St. Patrick called the 'Breastplate prayer': "Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise, Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me."

Irish Blessings for St. Patrick's Day: 1. May your neighbors respect you, troubles neglect you, the angels protect you, and Heaven accept you. 2. May your home always be too small to hold all of your friends. 3. May the road rise to meet you, may the wind be always at your back, may the sun shine warm upon your face, and rains fall soft upon your fields, and until we meet again, may God hold you in the hollow of His hand. 4. May your glass be ever full. May the roof over your head be always strong. And may you be in heaven half an hour before the devil knows you are dead. 5. May the Irish hills caress you. May her lakes and rivers bless you. May the luck of the Irish enfold you. May the blessings of St. Patrick behold you.

Solemnity of the Feast of St. Joseph, March 19: The foster father of Jesus, St. Joseph is the patron saint of workers, carpenters, fathers, and of the universal Church. Joseph in his dreams discerns God's call and carries out the will of God. He is attuned to the voice of God in his life. He is told to accept Mary into his home and as his wife. He is highly considerate and just as he plans on setting Mary aside quietly, but is reassured by the angel that she has conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit. He flees to Egypt with the divine baby and Mary after being prompted to do so by the angel. He returns when it is safe again, heeding the voice of God. He is a man of few words. He protects Jesus and Mary and cares for them by plying his trade of carpentry. He is a patron saint of happy death because it's believed that when he was dying he was privileged to have Jesus and Mary at his deathbed.

The Word of God, Fifth Sunday of Lent: In the context of the impending death of Jesus, the Word of God invites us to journey closer to Jesus. In the gospel, there is an interesting story of the Greeks wanting to see Jesus and they go to Philip. Philip goes to Andrew. They both then go to Jesus and tell him about it. It tells us that we need to go to others for inspiration and growth in our faith. Also, we have the calling to lead and guide people to experience Jesus. There are many in our own families that long to encounter Jesus. They may not even be aware of this longing. We need to be perceptive and find ways of leading them to Jesus, as Philip and Andrew were able to do. We all need each other as we make our journey to the heart and mind of Jesus Christ, from whom blessings flow for now and forever.

Think About it: The Look of Jesus: In the gospel according to Luke we read: But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." At that moment, while he was still speaking, a cock crew; and the Lord turned and looked straight at Peter... and Peter went outside and wept. Reflection: I related well with the Lord. I would converse with him, thank him, and ask for help. But always I had this uneasy feeling that he wanted me to look at him... And I would not. I would talk, but look away when I sensed he was looking at me. I was afraid I should find an accusation in his eyes of some unrepented sin. Or a demand: something he wanted from me. One day I summoned up courage and looked! There was no accusation. No demand. The eyes just said, "I love you." And, like Peter, I went outside and wept. (ADM)

Saint John the 23rd: When Pope John XXIII was dying, Cardinal Testa came to see him and asked: "How's my friend, Roncalli?" The pope answered with great effort: "Your friend Roncalli is really bad, but I heard on the radio that John XXIII is much better."

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota.