

Fr. Charles Puthota's Blog

January 3, 2021

From the Pastor's Desktop



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

New Year 2021: I trust your Christmas and New Year celebrations have been special and memorable for the many blessings of love, family, faith, and joy they have brought in your life. All this in the midst of the pandemic. However muted our celebrations may have been, the mystery of the birth of our Savior shines brightly. Now what really matters is to let the Christmas blessings linger and last. It's like a wedding. When I run into couples whose weddings I have presided over, I would sometimes remind them to let love and romance---and the honeymoon---last as long as possible in their married life; if possible over a lifetime! That is despite all sorts of conflicts and heartaches in married life. Likewise, let the blessings of the Christmas and New Year celebrations last as long as possible into 2021 despite the many challenges we'll face. COVID-19 has upended many aspects of our lives in our country and all over the world. But the vaccines have come bringing with them a spark of hope to an anxious world. With all of us collaborating with the civil authorities and following the recommendations of the Church, we will slowly be on our way toward the end of the tunnel. If God in Jesus Christ, the Emmanuel, is with us, what can anyone do to us? "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8). Let this trust in the intimacy of God in our lives strengthen and energize us for all that shall be in this New Year. With God on our side, nothing will be impossible for us.

Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord: As we celebrate this Sunday January 3 the Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord, we come like those three wise men to the manger and look up the divine baby, bearing our own "gifts." Epiphany, as you know, means manifestation, revelation. The feast recognizes that Jesus is savior not just for one nation but for the whole world. The three wise men, having adored the holy baby, will take with them the astounding news of the mysterious birth of the savior to their nations and thus help spread the good news to the ends of the earth. Therefore, at the heart of this event, there is the message for us to make Christ the new-born King known to the world through our love and faith. What can I say and do to make Jesus known? What are the values I need to live by in order to make Jesus be born spiritually in the world now?

There are certain things we could explore as inspiration from the event of the Epiphany. Are we ready to make the journey to the new-born baby? It would involve getting out of our familiar "places," our own positions, our own way of thinking and acting, and undertaking a journey of adventure. Can we see the "star" that is sent to guide and lead us? What is that star in our lives today? In what form and shape do we see that star? How does God speak and guide us in our current circumstances? Does he use our own family members and friends to send those messages of guidance and protection? Do we miss God's signs of love and grace? God is speaking to us through the signs of the times. May we have the courage and discernment to make the journey to Christ our Lord, to recognize him in people and circumstances, and having adored him, let's go by another way back to where we came from, so that we live lives take on a whole new meaning, urgency, and purpose.

New Year's Humor: 1. "Hope you are not too exhausted from your yearly visit to the gym on New Year's Day." 2. "I don't need a New Year's resolution. You don't need that crap when you're perfect." 3. "I don't know what's so special about the New Year's Eve. I drop the ball at least once a day." 4. "A New Year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other." 5. Biggest joke of the century: "Computers and mobile were invented to save our time." 6. "Tell me a joke" --- "I don't think you'd understand a joke in my language. They are not so funny, anyway." 7. "Life is short. Smile while you still have teeth." 8. "I started thinking about the dangers of drinking on New Year's Eve. After that, I decided to stop thinking." 9. "If people could read my mind, I'd get punched in the face a lot." 10. "Of course, women don't work as hard as men. They get it right the first time."

An Irish Blessing for the New Year: “May God give you, for every storm, a rainbow; for every tear, a smile; for every care, a promise; a blessing in each trial; for every problem life sends, a faithful friend to share; for every sigh, a sweet song; and an answer for each prayer. Amen.”

I'm thinking of you with love and affection and sending you warm wishes for a Happy New Year! Let's meet each day of 2021 with grace, love, and generosity of spirit.

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota