

Fr. Charles Puthota's Blog

July 4, 2021

From the Pastor's Desktop



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Independence Day: As we celebrate our nation's Independence Day this Fourth of July and enjoy the weekend with barbecues, parades, and parties, with Covid restrictions still in effect, I recall the day some years ago when I took the oath to become a citizen of this country. I was filled with happiness and pride. Nita Ricotta, my friend from St. Veronica Parish, accompanied me to this ceremony held in a theater in Oakland. The place was filled with a few thousand people. I discovered how all these people from over 100 different countries were all excited and eager to become American citizens. There was a great sense of elation and jubilation in everyone. Before the oath was administered, people in the hall were asked to stand country by country and introduced to everyone else. People exhibited great pride in belonging to those different countries. But they were at the same time eager and excited to become the citizens of this nation, the land of the free and the home of the brave. When the oath was administered, all these people from different corners of the world were allowed, as it were, to enter the heart and soul of this nation. The joy of these new citizens was deep and intense. They were waving the American flags boisterously; many were shedding tears. It was a sight to behold. It was a powerful demonstration of what this nation stands for: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. There is something so beautiful and powerful that this nation has to offer to people from all over the world. What is it that makes this nation so attractive and appealing to other nations? What is this thing that we call the "American Dream"? Or, the Spirit of America? Obviously, it's just not the material things. This country offers everyone possibilities and opportunities to strive, progress, and excel. This Independence Day, we could all resolve---native-born and the naturalized citizens---not to take the blessings of this nation for granted. Let's join the 329 million others in the U.S. as we sing and pray: "America! America! God shed His grace on thee, And crown thy good with brotherhood, From sea to shining sea!... America! America! God mend thine ev'ry flaw, Confirm thy soul in self-control, Thy liberty in law!..."

God Bless America the Beautiful: "America was not built on fear. America was built on courage, on imagination, and an unbeatable determination to do the job at hand" --- Harry S. Truman.
"Remember, remember always, that all of us, and you and I especially, are descended from immigrants and revolutionists" --- Franklin D. Roosevelt. "America is great because she is good. If America ceases to be good, America will cease to be great. ... America is a land of wonders, in which everything is in constant motion and every change seems an improvement" --- Alexis de Tocqueville.
"From every mountain side, let freedom ring" --- Samuel F. Smith. "This country will not be a good place for any of us to live in unless we make it a good place for all of us to live in" --- Theodore Roosevelt

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is doubt, faith. Where there is despair, hope. Where there is darkness, light. Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love. For it is in giving that we receive. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

Some Quotable Quotes: "Aspire to inspire before you expire." "Life is a journey, not a destination." "Life is a journey, not a race." "Living well is the best revenge." "Conquer from within." "Smile: happy looks good on you." "Some people are so poor, all they have is money." "Start each day with a grateful heart." "Live what you love."

A Metaphorical Story to Ponder: A group of tourists sits in a bus that is passing through gorgeously beautiful country; lakes and mountains and green fields and rivers. But the shades of the bus are pulled down. They do not have the slightest idea of what lies beyond the windows of the bus. And all the time of their journey is spent in squabbling over who will have the seat of honor in the bus, who will be applauded, who will be well considered. And so they remain till the journey's end.

Jokes: 1. A little boy was listening to a long and excessively boring sermon in church. Suddenly his eye the red sanctuary lamp caught his eye. Tugging his father's sleeve, he said, "Daddy, when the light turns green can we go?"

2. Two Jesuit novices both wanted a cigarette while they prayed. They decided to ask their superior for permission. The first asked but was told no. A little while later he spotted his friend smoking and praying. "Why did the superior allow you to smoke and not me?" he asked. His friend replied, "Because you asked if you could smoke while you prayed, and I asked if I could pray while I smoked!"

Happy Independence Day! God Bless America! May America be---and become---a blessing to the whole world! Every nation in the world looks up to America for truth, justice, peace! May this nation fulfill its destiny by sharing generously its blessings with all nations, especially those in most need!

Your Friend & Pastor,

Fr. Charles Puthota