

Fr. Charles Puthota's Blog

December 12, 2021

From the Pastor's Desktop



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Advent Season: We are steadily journeying through this season of hope, the season of coming, the season of Advent. Deep down, through all our hectic activities, we perceive a person who is precious and beautiful, central and vital, to our lives. That is Jesus Christ. He came historically over 2000 years ago, but amazingly he comes into our lives now mystically---and mysteriously. Our spiritual awakening to the presence of someone who is intimate in our lives and yet all pervasive and transcendent brings us face to face with Christ, the giver of all gifts and blessings this holy season. Awake, my heart! Awake, my soul to Christ who has everything to do with my deepest and noblest longings and hopes! He it is who has brought us into life, he it is who has endowed us with blessings upon blessings, he it is who guides us through thick and thin, he it is who shines and smiles in our joys, he it is who comforts and consoles in our fears and anguish, he it is who shepherds us even after death---into life eternal. As we come closer to Christmas, we could keep humming in our hearts the longing-laden song: "O come, O come Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel." There is joy and sadness, longing and hope---all rolled into one in this ancient hymn. Let the Lord come into our lives and families---and let him stand with us, walk with us, and gaze upon us with love and tenderness

Word of God this Rejoice Sunday: This Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent, is called Gaudete (Rejoice!) Sunday. As we draw closer to Christmas, the Church invites us to rejoice at the soon-awaited birth of the Savior of the world. In Zephaniah we read: "Shout for joy, O daughter Zion! Sing joyfully, O Israel! Be Glad and exult your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!" Are we ready to rejoice at the presence of Christ who is going to turn his abiding presence into a "coming" in our lives this holy season? We need to be filled with joy because Jesus is delighted with us and rejoices over us. Our most authentic joy this season can come from the personal experience of a God in Jesus who rejoices over us and from the way we can share this joy with family and friends and all those we are called to help and serve.

Synod of Bishops in 2023: Pope Francis formally launched the two-year global consultation process leading to the 2023 synod on synodality with a call to "look others in the eye and listen to what they have to say." Preaching at Mass at St. Peter's Basilica on Oct. 10, the pope said that Catholics taking part in the synodal path should strive to "become experts in the art of encounter." **To foster unity and assist the Pope:** The Synod of Bishops was established by Pope St Paul VI toward the end of the Second Vatican Council. According to the Code of Canon Law, the synod is "a group of bishops who have been chosen from different regions of the world and meet together at fixed times to foster closer unity between the Roman Pontiff and bishops, to assist the Roman Pontiff with their counsel in the preservation and growth of faith and morals and in the observance and strengthening of ecclesiastical discipline, and to consider questions pertaining to the activity of the Church in the world".

Normally, the Synod of Bishops meets for Ordinary General Assemblies every 3-4 years, with other meetings (Extraordinary General Assemblies or Special Assemblies) taking place at the discretion of the Pope. An Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops was convoked by Pope Francis in 2014 on "The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization"; one year later, the Ordinary General Assembly considered the topic of "The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World". In 2018, the Ordinary General Assembly focused on "Young People, Faith, and Vocational Discernment". Most recently, in October of 2019, Pope Francis called a Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon region, "to identify new paths for the evangelization of God's people in that region". (Vatican News)

Christmas Mass Schedule: Christmas Eve Friday December 24 Masses at 4:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.
Christmas Day Saturday December 25 Masses at 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Simbang Gabi Christmas Novena Mass Schedule: December 16 through 24 at 8:30 a.m. except on Sunday Dec. 19 which would be the 9:30 a.m. Mass. To plan, support, and sponsor, please contact Gloria Trinidad.

A Story to Ponder: Every day in the corner of a library in Japan an old monk was to be found sitting in peaceful meditation. "I never see you read the sutras," said the librarian. "I never learnt to read," replied the monk. "That's a disgrace. A monk like you ought to be able to read. Shall I teach you?" "Yes. Tell me," said the monk pointing to himself, "what is the meaning of this character?"

Humor:

1. Pilot to passengers in mid-flight: "I regret to inform you we are in terrible trouble. Only God can save us now." A passenger turned to a priest to ask what the pilot had said and got this reply: "He says there's no hope!"
2. A devout, church-going father was trying to teach his son that lying is a sin and that he shouldn't lie about fishing and other things. "Do you know what happens to fishermen who lie when they die?" he asked. The son quickly replied, "They lie still!"

Wishing you the blessings of the Advent Season,

Your Friend & Pastor,

Fr. Charles Puthota