

Fr. Charles Puthota's Blog

December 26, 2021

From the Pastor's Desktop



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Feast of the Holy Family: This Sunday is the Feast of the Holy Family. Jesus lives with Mary and Joseph. Because of Jesus, this family becomes a holy family. The same way, when Jesus lives in our families, our families become holy. The purpose of this feast is to let Jesus be part of all that we are --- and strive for---in our families. As we look at all the struggles and dangers the Holy Family faced, we too draw strength to face life with grace because Jesus is with us. Let him fill our families with his Spirit and love.

Quotes from Pope Francis on Family: "It is normal that there be a quarrel between husband and wife... Maybe you're angry, maybe a plate flew, but please remember this: never finish the day without making peace! Never, never, never! This is a secret, a secret to protect love and to make peace." "We all know there is no such thing as the perfect family or a perfect husband or wife, and let's not even talk about the perfect mother -in-law.... It's us who do exist, sinners. Jesus knows us well and He tells us a secret: Never let the day end without apologizing."

Christmas lingers: I hope your Christmas has been a blessed and heartwarming one, bringing you closer to the One who is closer to us than we are to ourselves. The beauty and glory of Christmas continues, not just for a day or a few days, but through each day and throughout our lives. The heart of Christmas is the mystery of the Incarnation, that of God becoming one with us, entering our history, our flesh and blood, our human family, and all that we are engaged in life, love, and growth, our pains and joys, our triumphs and travails, our ambiguities and anomalies. Jesus lives inside of our lives. He is Emmanuel, God who is with us, every nanosecond of our lives. So, long live the mystery and majesty of Christmas!

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens: *It is a play about a mean-spirited and selfish old man, Ebenezer Scrooge, who hates Christmas.* One cold Christmas Eve, Scrooge is unkind to the people who work for him, then refuses to give to charity, and then is rude to his nephew when he invites him to spend Christmas with him. When Scrooge gets home, he is visited by the ghost of his old business partner Jacob Marley - and then by three ghosts! They are the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present and Christmas Future. The Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge on a journey through Christmases from his past, taking Scrooge to see himself as an unhappy child and a young man more in love with money than his fiancé. The Ghost of Christmas Present shows Scrooge his clerk, Bob Cratchit's family. At Bob Cratchit's house Scrooge sees Tiny Tim, who is very ill, but full of spirit. The ghost then takes him to see his nephew Fred's Christmas celebrations - which he had been invited to, but rebuffed. Finally, The Ghost of Christmas Future terrifies Scrooge by showing him visions of his own death... The ghosts' journey through time teaches Scrooge the error of his ways. When he wakes up on Christmas Day he is full of excitement, and buys the biggest turkey in the shop for the Cratchit family before spending the day with his nephew, full of the joys of Christmas.

New Year 2022: Let the spirit and spirituality of Christmas inform and inspire us as we come to the end of 2021 and are about to usher in a whole new year. Abraham Lincoln says, "The best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time." Let our future, an abstract and uncertain reality, come one day at a time in 2022, as we address each day with the grace and dignity that we can muster, with God's presence, help, and guidance. Henry David Thoreau says, "Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in." So, let's go fishing! Remember the gospel story of Jesus asking the apostles to put out into the deep waters in the Sea of Galilee? They had toiled all night long with no results, but Jesus tells them not to be discouraged but to be adventurous ---and go deeper. They caught so many fish they couldn't haul it in without a lot of help from others. Let our fishing in the New Year be characterized by faith, adventure, risk-taking, and guided by Christ. Let's keep in mind the popular saying: "Yesterday is history; tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift---That's why we call it the present."

Our Thanksgiving Collection sent to CRS: On Thanksgiving Day at the Mass, we no longer collect the canned food but take up an offering that will be directed to a charitable organization. In 2020 we had directed the collection to St. Anthony's Dining Room in San Francisco. This 2021 Thanksgiving Day collection amounted to \$845 and, as announced, sent to Catholic Relief Services (CRS) after rounding the amount off to \$1000. I included a personal note on behalf of our parish when I mailed that amount. I would like to thank you all for your generosity. CRS, as you may be aware, operates in this country and around the world, bring much-needed relief to many who are poor.

New Year's Day Prayer: Dear Lord, So far this year I've done well. I haven't gossiped, I haven't lost my temper, I haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish, or overindulgent. I'm very thankful for that. But in a few minutes, Lord, I'm going to get out of bed, and from then on, I'm probably going to need a lot of your help. Amen.

Wishing you and your families a joyful, restful, and faith-filled Christmas season, and a healthy and happy New Year!

Your Friend & Pastor,

Fr. Charles Puthota