

Fr. Charles Puthota's Blog

January 2, 2022

From the Pastor's Desktop



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Sunday January 2 is Epiphany of the Lord: It is a story of our life, a celebration that is both charming and profoundly meaningful. The story of the three wise men or the three kings is a story enacted by children with gusto in any Christmas pageant. I was myself as a little boy was a “king” who went around my town in procession on this Feast of Epiphany. The new-born King is not for one nation or people, but to all peoples of the world. Jesus is the light of the world. He is born to reveal God’s love and include us all in the Kingdom of God. He is the savior of the whole world. It is this theological and spiritual meaning that we celebrate in this feast.

We could keep certain details of the story relevant for our lives today. One, we need to see the star and interpret it as God speaking to us and revealing himself. What star do we see in our lives? What signs are there for us to read and interpret? Or are we missing the signs? Two, we have to leave our comfort zones to follow the star, undertaking all sorts of inconvenient, arduous things. Nothing ventured, nothing achieved. The star will lead us through all sorts of sad and difficult situations, but it will keep our hope alive of reaching the destination. Three, we are to encounter Jesus and adore him. He may be in a manger amidst animals and in all sorts of unexpected, surprising, shocking situations. But he is still the King. We are to recognize him and bring ourselves as the best gifts. We can give him our hearts and minds, our will and all our talents. Four, once we have encountered and worshipped the Lord, we cannot walk the same way. We have to take a different route because we are no longer the same. We have been transformed. We are a new creation. He has touched us and given us a whole new purpose and direction.

New Year 2022: As we are welcoming a brand new year 2022, let’s place this whole new gift of time in God’s hands. May the good Lord guide and protect us. May he make our lives shine. May he transform us into his channels of grace and love. Let bygones be bygones. Let’s start anew and afresh to share our lives. We cannot allow pessimism or cynicism to tamper with the quality of life in the New Year. Let hope spring eternal in our hearts, motivating us to grapple with this new gift of time with optimism and joy. If God is for us, who can be against us? Thanks to all that has been in 2021. Yes to all that shall be in 2022. As Moses says: “The Lord bless you and keep you! The Lord let his face shine upon you and be gracious to you! The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!”

Preparation for the Synod of 2022: The Synod on Synodality (“walking together”) is a two-year process of listening and dialogue that began with a Papal solemn opening in Rome on October 9 and 10, 2021. Synod of Bishops will take place at the Vatican in October 2022 with the theme: "For a synodal church: Communion, participation and mission." The synodal process will conclude in 2023. I’m grateful to our parishioners Richard John, Antonia Velasco and Carol Anne Velasco for agreeing to be the contact persons from our parish in the process of preparation underway in our Archdiocese. Each parish will be involved in consultation and dialogue.

Christmas Season: Wishing you all a blessed Christmas season! I hope your Christmas day celebrations went well, filling you with joy and peace. As you know, Christmas is too important to be over in 24 hours' time. The mystery of Christ's birth continues. The beauty of the Incarnation is a never-ending reality. Jesus becoming one with us is a continuous process. The vital implication of his presence with us is that we are made sacred forever. We are sinful but sacred at the same time because of the Christmas mystery. When God has become one with us, why should we be afraid? Because the Lord of the Incarnation has pitched his tent with us, we can keep striving for all those things that make us better human beings and Christians. The Christmas season, in the liturgical sense, goes on till the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord on Sunday January 9. On January 10, the Ordinary Time of the Liturgical year starts but Lent is going to catch up with us on Ash Wednesday March 2. Meanwhile, let's now continue to enjoy the Christmas season with family and friends.

Think About It: "Your future depends on a lot of things, but mostly on you."

New Year Jokes: 1. A woman took an afternoon nap on New Year's Eve. When she woke up, she told her husband, "I just dreamed that you gave me a diamond ring for a New Year's present. What do you think it all means?" He replied, "Aha, you'll know tonight!" At midnight, her husband handed her a small gift-wrapped present. Excited, she opened it quickly, but was even more surprised: In it was a book titled *The Meaning of Dreams*.

2. A man who had too much to drink decides to walk home on New Year's Eve. A policeman stopped the man and asked where he was going. "I'm on my way to a lecture," the man replied. The cop scoffed, "Who gives lectures on New Year's Eve?" The man answered: "My wife."

Wishing you this blessing: May Christmas blessings fill each day of the New Year for you and your families!

Your Friend & Pastor,

Fr. Charles Puthota