

Fr. Charles Puthota's Blog

January 9, 2022

From the Pastor's Desktop



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Baptism of the Lord: This Sunday January 09 is Baptism of the Lord. With this Feast, the Christmas season comes to an end and Ordinary Time begins. Jesus was baptized, like we were all baptized too. Jesus did not need to be baptized because he was sinless, and yet in a way to identify with our human nature, he insisted on being baptized. It was a moment of revelation of the Trinity. The Father spoke: "You are my beloved son; with you I am well pleased." The Holy Spirit descended on him. Jesus begins his public ministry with this revelation and affirmation to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal and uplift, to wage a battle with evil and sin in the world. As we journey with Christ into his public ministry of the Kingdom of God, we might want to think about our own baptism. Baptism is not just an event; it is a way of life. It is a state of grace and new life. We live the life of Baptism throughout our lives. We were anointed at our baptism, freed from sin and empowered to be "priest, prophet, and king." We also promised to renounce sin and embrace faith community called the Church. The light of Christ was given to us from the paschal candle, inviting us to be enlightened and to radiate the light of Christ to others. A white garment was given to us as a sign of purity and dignity of new life. We are supposed to keep this garment, our soul, unstained until we are called to enter the everlasting life in heaven. Our baptism was filled with the power of God and the discipleship of Jesus. How are we doing in these areas? Do we continue to live a life of baptismal grace given to us years ago? At the celebration of Jesus' baptism, we might do well meditating on our own baptism and what we are called to be and do.

The Moveable Feasts: Around this time in the Liturgical Year, the Church follows an ancient custom of announcing the dates of movable Feasts for the coming year. This proclamation has been used in connection with the blessing and distribution of calendars. We are reminded of these movable Feasts in the new year as a way of looking forward to celebrating these divine mysteries. In the new year 2022, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 02. After five Sundays of Lent, Palm Sunday falls on April 10. Easter is on April 17. After six Sundays of Easter, the Ascension of the Lord is on May 29. Pentecost Sunday is on June 05. Holy Trinity is on June 12. The Body and Blood of Christ is on June 19. Christ the King is on November 20. The First Sunday of Advent is on November 27.

New Year 2022: We are still luxuriating in the freshness and beauty of the New Year, soaked in the warm glow of Christmas. What is the meaning of the "New Year"? There is nothing out there that is new. Time flows continuously like a river. It's we who have divided time as days, weeks, months, and years. But seconds and minutes and hours keep ticking away inexorably. These divisions and calculations of time are of human making. Time in itself is nothing new. What is really new is what we bring to time. What new thing that we will bring into this chunk of time called the New Year 2022? If we do not bring a fresh outlook and a desire to start anew and a concern to change ourselves for the better, then there would really be no difference between the last day of 2021 and the first day of 2022. The New Year is a reminder that God is giving us more time to catch up with things deeply human and deeply divine. It is more time for us to get it right. It is another opportunity for us to try again and rearrange our lives --- and to become the persons according to God's plan and purpose.

Recommending “Stories of a Generation with Pope Francis”: This is a documentary you can watch on Netflix. It features interviews with Pope Francis serving as a basis for heart-warming conversations with people on different continents. The titles of each of the four episodes are: Love, Dream, Struggle, and Work. Each episode lasts about 45 minutes. Pope Francis is as usual charming, insightful, and inspirational. He communicates soulfully. I highly recommend this program. If you have watched it, please do let me know so we could have a quick chat about what you liked and what touched you in this documentary program. Enjoy!

The Synod on Synodality: I have placed some relevant materials on our parish website. Please do visit for information about the synod. It is a two-year process of listening and dialogue beginning with a solemn opening in Rome on October 9 and 10, 2021. The synodal process will conclude in 2023. Pope Francis invites the entire Church to reflect on a theme that is decisive for its life and mission: “It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.” This journey, which follows in the wake of the Church’s “renewal” proposed by the Second Vatican Council, is both a gift and a task: by journeying together and reflecting together on the journey that has been made, the Church will be able to learn through Her experience which processes can help Her to live communion, to achieve participation, to open Herself to mission.

Short Humor:

1. Why can’t you explain puns to kleptomaniacs? They always take things literally.
2. A man tells his doctor, “Doc, help me. I’m addicted to Twitter!” The doctor replies, “Sorry, I don’t follow you...”
3. What kind of exercise do lazy people do? Diddly-squats.
4. What did the Buddhist say to the hot dog vendor? Make me one with everything.
5. What did the pirate say when he turned 80? Aye matey.

Wishing you the joys, hopes, and blessings as we venture slowly into the New Year 2022!

Your Friend & Pastor,

Fr. Charles Puthota