

Fr. Charles Puthota's Blog

January 16, 2022

From the Pastor's Desktop



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Ordinary Time in the Liturgical Year --- Focus on Jesus: The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord celebrated on January 09th brings the Christmas season to a close. The liturgical “ordinary time” begins from January 10th through February 28th. Then the season of Lent begins March 02nd with Ash Wednesday. The Ordinary Time in the liturgical calendar is a kind of technical term to say that this time is outside the special season of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. Though called ordinary, it is still a time when we walk with Jesus and meditate on his teachings and healings as he is engaged in his public ministry. We journey with Jesus from his birth to death, the mysteries of Incarnation and Resurrection. In between these seasons, we open our lives more and more to the mystery of Jesus walking and talking with us. Our Catholic-Christian faith is Christo-centric. Let’s keep asking the basic questions: who is Jesus to me in my present stage of life? What does he say to me? What do I speak to him about? How does he enter my thoughts, feelings, words, and deeds? How does he relate to my joys and sorrows, my hopes and disappointments? To the extent we can search for answers to these most fundamental questions, to that degree we’ll find ourselves more securely anchored to meaning of life now and into eternity.

A Survey on the life in the church: This weekend and in the next few weekends we will be administering the survey entitled “Disciple Maker Index Survey” as part of the synodal conversation that Pope Francis has initiated. All parishes in the Archdiocese are expected to fill out this survey. I’d earnestly request you to take a copy home and diligently return it after filling it out. Your feedback is much appreciated, and the results will be codified by the Archdiocese and eventually these results will help the Holy Father in assessing the mood and the feeling of the Church all over the world in regard to the mission of the Church in the 21st century. For more information on the synod, please visit our parish website where I have placed some important resources. I’d like to thank Antonia Velasco, Carol Anne Velasco, and Richard John for being the contact persons from our parish in making sure this process is successfully completed from our parish.

Word of God: Wedding at Cana is the charming gospel story this Sunday. There are some insights we could keep in our hearts and ponder over them. One, that Jesus is present in our social events, not just spiritual events. In the church and in our homes and out there on Main Street and Market Street, Jesus is present everywhere. The mystery of the Incarnation is that he inserts himself into the thick of our lives and that has become one with us. He is “on the way” with us. Everything is steeped in sacredness because of his constant and continuous gracious presence. Two, when the party runs out of wine, he is ready to intervene and do something about it. Wine could represent the gift of joy, the sense of well-being, a sense of security. When we run out of joy and energy for life, Jesus is there to replenish our supplies, so that we may experience “joie de vivre.” Three, this event foreshadows the Last Supper and the Eucharist, when Jesus will turn wine into his blood and feed us. Four, Mary his mother too is part of the celebration. She is always ready to speak on behalf of us to her son. Five, Mary’s instruction that we must do whatever Jesus tells us to do is a reminder always for us to follow Jesus in his words and deeds and become authentic disciples and apostles. Six, John the evangelist calls it “the beginning of the signs,” implying that there are more signs to come and in all these signs, there is revelation, epiphany, of Jesus so that we could come to believe in Jesus and receive not just life, but abundant life.

An Inspirational Story --- Two Wolves: One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, “My son, the battle is between two wolves inside us all. One is Evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith.” The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: “Which wolf wins?” The old Cherokee simply replied, “The one you feed.” (ADM)

Clever Humor: 1. A Buddhist walks up to a hot dog stand and says, “Make me one with everything.” 2. I told my doctor that I broke my arm in two places. He told me to stop going to those places. 3. Wanna hear a joke about Potassium? (whether they say ‘yes’ or ‘no’): K. 4. I asked my North Korean friend how it was there; he said he couldn’t complain. 5. There’s no “I” in Denial. 6. Exaggerations went up by a million percent last year. 7. I used to be addicted to soap, but I’m clean now. 8. I was wondering why does a Frisbee appear larger the closer it gets . . . then it hit me. 9. Have I told you this deja vu joke before? 10. Nostalgia isn’t what it used to be . . .

Think About It: “I wish more people were fluent in silence.”

New Year Wish: Hope the New Year 2022 is treating you all with kindness and gentleness. May every hour, every day, every week, and every month of this New Year be filled with God’s blessings upon blessings.

Your Friend & Pastor,

Fr. Charles Puthota