

# Fr. Charles Puthota's Blog

July 3, 2022

From the Pastor's Desktop



**Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,**

**Independence Day:** As we celebrate our nation's Independence Day on Fourth of July and enjoy the weekend perhaps with barbecues, parades, and parties, I recall the day some years ago when I took the oath to become a citizen of this country. I was filled with happiness and pride. A friend of mine, Nita Ricotta, accompanied me to this ceremony held in a theater in downtown Oakland. The place was filled with a few thousand people. I discovered how all these people from over 100 different countries were all excited and eager to become American citizens. There was a palpable sense of elation and jubilation in the crowd. Before the oath was administered, people in the hall were asked to stand country by country and introduced to everyone else. People exhibited great pride in belonging to those different countries. But they were at the same time eager and excited to become the citizens of this nation, the land of the free and the home of the brave. When the oath was administered, all these people from different corners of the world were merged into the heart and soul of this nation. The joy of these new citizens was deep and intense. They were waving the American flags boisterously; many were shedding tears. It was a sight to behold. It was an inspiring demonstration of what this nation stands for: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

There is something beautiful and powerful that this nation has to offer to people from all over the world. What is it that makes this nation so attractive to other nations? What is this thing that we call the "American Dream"? Obviously, it's just not the material things. This country offers everyone possibilities and opportunities to strive, progress, and excel. This Independence Day, we could all resolve---natives and the naturalized citizens---not to take the blessings of this nation for granted. Let's join the 335 million people of the U.S. as we sing and pray: "America! America! God shed His grace on thee, And crown thy good with brotherhood From sea to shining sea!... America! America! God mend thine ev'ry flaw, Confirm thy soul in self-control, Thy liberty in law!... America! America! May God thy gold refine Till all success be nobleness, And ev'ry gain divine!"

**Some Patriotic Quotes:**

"America is another name for opportunity. Our whole history appears like a last effort of divine providence on behalf of the human race."---Ralph Waldo Emerson.

"I think patriotism is like charity—it begins at home."---Henry James.

"Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country."--- John F. Kennedy.

"Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the Earth."--- Abraham Lincoln.

"In the truest sense, freedom cannot be bestowed; it must be achieved."---Franklin D. Roosevelt.

"From every mountainside, let freedom ring."---Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Word of God:** Jesus sends us out. It happens continuously. He sends us out not to a faraway country as missionaries, as it sometimes might happen, but for most of us, most of the time, Jesus sends us out to our own family, neighborhood, friends, organizations, work places, parish community, etc. to continue and complete the mission of Christ. Jesus did that over 2000 years ago when he sent the 72 disciples “to every town and place he intended to visit.” He said to them: “The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest.” We are called to cure the sick and proclaim the Kingdom of God. Toward the end of the passage today, Jesus cautions them not to gloat over the fact of the demons obeying them but rather in the fact that their names are written in heaven. Our names are written in heaven. The call therefore is to live up to the truth that we belong to this earth as well as to heaven. Our life journey is oriented toward making this world a better place where the Kingdom of God would come. Our life is also oriented toward the ultimate union we will have with God to live for eternity in joy and peace. That’s where our dear departed ones have gone. That’s where we shall go one day. May the life we have with Jesus on a daily basis as he sends us out to one another, to love and serve, lead us to our fulfillment and happiness.

**What is Catholicism?** Richard McBrien, a well-known theologian says this: “Catholicism is characterized by a both/and rather than an either/or approach. It is not nature *or* grace, but graced nature; not reason *or* faith, but reason illumined by faith; not law *or* Gospel, but law inspired by the Gospel; not Scripture *or* tradition, but normative tradition within Scripture; not faith *or* works, but faith issuing in works and works as expressions of faith; not authority *or* freedom, but authority in the service of freedom; not unity *or* diversity, but unity in diversity.”

**Short Jokes:**

1. A guest is ordering at a restaurant. “Do you think you could bring me what that gentleman over there is having?” The waiter: “No, sir, I’m very sure he intends to eat it himself.”
2. Patient: “Oh, Doctor, I’m starting to forget things.” Doctor: “Since when have you had this condition?” Patient: “What condition?”
3. Wife: “Honey, soon there will be three of us here. Isn’t that great?” Husband: “Oh, darling, that’s simply wonderful!” Wife: “I’m so happy you feel that way! I did tell my mom you won’t mind her moving in!”
4. Dentist: “You need a crown.” Patient: “Finally someone who understands me.”
5. “99.8% people have problems with math.” “I’m glad I’m in the remaining 1%”

**Happy Independence Day!**

Your Friend and Pastor,  
Father Charles Puthota