

Fr. Charles Puthota's Blog

September 4, 2022

From the Pastor's Desktop



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Musings on Labor Day: Labor Day pays tribute to the contributions and achievements of American workers and is traditionally observed on the first Monday in September. It was created by the labor movement in the late 19th century and became a federal holiday in 1894. Celebrating Labor Day, as Christians, we could think about the theological and spiritual meaning of this celebration: that God has created every one and that God has called us to the dignity of work and the rights of workers. We are deeply aware that God himself is a worker, laboring to create and recreate the world and every living creature on the planet earth and sustaining the whole universe. In our work, we come to resemble God who is a worker himself. God blesses us with the ability to work so that we can honor him through our work, our creativity and enterprise.

The Church has always insisted that the economic reality of any society must serve the people and is highly suspicious of the marketplace taking precedence over the rights of workers. Work is more than a way to make a living. It is a form of continuing participation in God's creation and as such affords dignity and respect to all human endeavors. There is a basic need for everyone's basic needs: living wages, affordable housing, medical care, and education. "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" need to be concretized in the needs and necessities of people. The Catholic Social teaching proclaims that work has a value that goes beyond what it produces. Work is a basic human right because it is necessary for human life and enables us to participate and improve the life of the community. Therefore, the Church fully supports the right of workers to form unions or other associations to secure rights to fair wages and working conditions. Pope Benedict XVI in "Charity in Truth" (Caritas in Veritate) says: "I would like to remind everyone, especially governments engaged in boosting the world's economic and social assets, that the primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is man, the human person in his or her integrity. Man is the source, the focus and the aim of all economic and social life."

Word of God: For the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, in the Gospel, Jesus tells us two things: one, that we must take up our cross daily and follow Jesus; two, that we must calculate the cost of following Jesus. "Costing not less than everything" (American poet T.S. Eliot in **Four Quartets**) would be the price that we may have to pay in discipleship. We cannot have the values of the world and Jesus' values at the same time. We are to choose which way we will travel: the one less travelled by. A concrete example is given in the second reading from the letter to Philemon when Paul is asking Philemon to accept Onesimus (Philemon's former slave) "no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a brother..." In Jesus, the old order has passed away. We have to give up those values that do not belong to Jesus and embrace the light and love of Christ. The first reading from Wisdom reinforces this calling because the person with the Holy Spirit will judge things wisely and choose those that belong to God. Our prayer could be: "Let your face shine upon your servant; and teach me your laws" (Alleluia verse).

Extraordinary Ministers of the Holy Communion (EMHC) Training: Saturday, September 24 will be the training for EMHC. I have provided the reading material to reflect on by way of preparation for this training. Those attending will gather for the 8:30 a.m. Mass and then start our sessions in Cantwell Hall.

Archdiocesan Annual Appeal (AAA) Gratitude Dinner: Sunday September 11 the 1% Circle will gather for a sumptuous catered dinner. Several weeks ago, I had sent you the invitations to this event and I'm hoping everyone invited has RSVPed already. This is to celebrate our connection with the Archdiocese and our successful project to raise the AAA amount within a short period of time. This year we completed our goal within eight weeks (two months). Please would you keep donating generously and promptly to AAA each year?

Quotable Quote: "Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do."---Mark Twain

A Story to Think About: A Sufi (a mystic of Islamic tradition) of forbidding appearance arrived at the doors of the palace. No one dared to stop him as he made his way right up to the throne on which the saintly Ibrahim ben Adam sat. "What is it you want?" asked the king. "A place to sleep in this caravanserai." "This is no caravanserai. This is my palace. "May I ask who owned this place before you?" "My father. He is dead." "And who owned it before him?" "My grandfather. He is dead too." "And this place where people lodge for a brief while and move on-did I hear you say it was not a caravanserai?" Moral of the Story: *Everyone's in the departure lounge!*

Religious Humor:

1. A pastor phoned the municipal office to ask that a dead mule be removed from the front of the church. The young clerk, who took the phone, thought he would be smart. "I thought you clergyman took care of the dead," he remarked flippantly. "We do," answered the pastor, "but first we get in touch with their relatives."
2. Once an agnostic asked a priest if he believed that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. "When I go to heaven, I will ask Jonah," said the priest. "But suppose you won't find him there?" asked the agnostic. "Then you will have to ask him," was the reply.
3. John Wesley, founder of Methodism, once confronted the dandy, Beau Nash, on a very narrow sidewalk in Oxford. Nash with an air of arrogance said, "I never make way for a fool." "Don't you?" asked Wesley in half jest. "I always do." And he stepped aside.

Your Friend and Pastor,
Father Charles Puthota