

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Spiritual Reflection from Father Charles Puthota



October 30, 2022

Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Tuesday, November 01---Feast of All Saints---A Holy Day of Obligation---Masses at 8:30a.m. and 6:00p.m.:

We begin this emotion-laden month of November with the solemnity of All Saints (All Hallows). Having completed the cultural celebration of the Eve of Hallows as Halloween, here we celebrate the holy feast of all saints, canonized and not canonized, known and unknown. Originally the feast began when there were so many martyrs that there was a felt need to honor them. It then became a way of honoring all saints, all holy men and women, who have reached the beatific vision of God and are now safe in the very heart of God, even if they are not officially declared as saints by the Church. We would like to think that some or many of our own family members have been privileged to become saints and have attained the life of perfection in heaven; that they have joined Mary, our blessed mother, the angels, and saints; that they are beholding the face of God for eternity with Jesus and the Holy Spirit. What a blessed state! What a glorious state of life! This holy feast invites us to thank God for all the marvelous deeds God in Jesus has done in the lives of all these saints. We feel a deep sense of gratitude and joy. This feast also reminds us that we are all destined to be saints. All are called to holiness. "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," is the invitation and challenge. Be holy. Do holy. It is not easy, though. We are pulled and pushed by external and internal forces and allurements, our addictions and attachments, our biases and prejudices. We are tempted and dazzled by all sorts of things in the world. To seek holiness in the midst of bewildering things and choices is not at all easy. That's why Jesus walks with us and gives us his Spirit to lead and guide us so that we may keep running the race, knowing that in all our endeavors, struggles, and failures, we are graced and strengthened in this pilgrimage of life.

November 01---The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed---All Souls' Day---Mass as usual at

8:30a.m.: We commemorate all those who have been called to God. We specially think of those in our own families who have gone before us. We hold their memory sacred. We loved them in life, we continue to love them in death. Life is changed, not ended. Love is stronger than death. We bring our love, faith, and prayer to support them in their journey of purification and attainment of perfection with God. It has always been a tradition in the Catholic faith to visit graves on All Souls Day and other days, especially in November. So let's make time for that, if possible. As we stand at their graves, as we may shed tears and are filled with loss and grief, let us know that God will wipe away every tear and grant them eternal peace and fulfillment. It is also an occasion for us to think of life and death. Awareness of death can make life more precious and beautiful. Against the background of death, life takes on great urgency and acute significance. Because of death, we have to live better lives. Because of death, we have to become the people God wants us to be in this life. Because of death, we need to become more authentic disciples and apostles of Jesus. Because of death, love becomes not only necessary but also urgent. **Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. Amen. May they rest in peace! Amen. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.**

Quotes on Death and Life:

“The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time.” -
-- Mark Twain.

“If there is a meaning in life at all, then there must be a meaning in suffering. Suffering is an ineradicable part of life, even as fate and death. Without suffering and death, human life cannot be complete.” --- Viktor E. Frankl.

“Every parting gives a foretaste of death, every reunion a hint of the resurrection.” --- Arthur Schopenhauer.

“Death is a challenge. It tells us not to waste time ... It tells us to tell each other right now that we love each other.” --- Leo Buscaglia.

“Because I could not stop for death, he kindly stopped for me; The carriage held but just ourselves and immortality.” --- Emily Dickinson.

“For life and death are one, even as the river and the sea are one.” --- Khalil Gibran.

Word of God: Conversion of Zacchaeus: The gospel the 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time from Luke’s gospel is about Zacchaeus, the tax collector and a wealthy person. He had everything except social standing. The religious and political establishment shunned him for collaborating with the occupying Roman empire. Restless and curious, he wanted to see Jesus. A short man, he climbed a sycamore tree to get a glimpse of Jesus. Jesus surprised him by inviting himself to his house. Jesus: is he a guest or a host in Zacchaeus’ house? This personal encounter with Jesus brings about an astonishing conversion and transformation in the life of Zacchaeus. He is now eager to make restitution and move forward as a changed person. Some questions we might ask for ourselves are: do I want to see Jesus? Do I make an effort in that desire? Will I give hospitality to Jesus in my life? Will I allow the grace of encounter with Jesus to bring about the new life? Will that conversion include a social dimension of caring for others and repairing the breach?

Humor:

1. The boss to one of his staff: “We’ve got a vacancy. Your twin brother could fill it.” “My twin brother?” “Yes. The one I saw at the football game yesterday while you were attending your uncle’s funeral.”
2. The secretary to her boss on the intercom: “There’s a gentleman on the line who would like to inquire into the secret of your success.” After a prolonged silence, the boss asks in a hoarse voice: “Is he a journalist or a policeman?”

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota