

# From the Pastor's Desktop

## A Message from Father Charles Puthota



December 4, 2022

### Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

**Season of Advent:** We are at the Second Sunday of Advent. December has dawned already, which means we are well on the way toward Christmas. The joyful and mournful song "O Come, O Come Emmanuel..." expressing the deep desire of expectation for the Lord will be the theme of the season. Jesus is the reason for the season. Advent is also a penitential season as we wait for Christmas. Through prayer and penance, we shall wait for the joy of God becoming one with us. This is a time of waiting for Jesus to enter our lives again so we can start all over again. It is yet another chance for us to get it right. Shall we renew our hearts and minds for his presence and love? He came, he will come, but now he comes. This is also a hectic time of external preparations and commerce. In the midst of it all, we still have to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the holy baby to be born. The question we could ask is: Do we really feel deep down that we need Jesus in our lives? It is that deeply felt need for Jesus that will make this season of Advent meaningful and purposeful. If we think we can manage our lives without Jesus, all the preparations for Christmas would purely be a social and cultural observance and not a spiritual experience of Jesus. It will all be external and nothing to do with the internal purification and renewal. It is Jesus who can truly bring peace and joy to us, our families, and the world torn by sadness and violence.

**Advent Quote:** "Advent is concerned with that very connection between memory and hope which is so necessary to us. Advent's intention is to awaken the most profound and basic emotional memory within us, namely, the memory of the God who became a child. This is a healing memory; it brings hope. The purpose of the Church's year is continually to rehearse her great history of memories, to awaken the heart's memory so that it can discern the star of hope....It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and thus to open doors of hope." --- Pope Benedict XVI

**Parish Advent Retreat Postponed:** Please be in touch with Sharon Soares and/or the parish office for the update on this event. The plan still is: I'll be giving three talks on the theme of "To Know Jesus, To Love Jesus, and To Follow Jesus." The Retreat starts with 8:30a.m. Mass followed by "coffee and donuts/bagels." We will have singing at the sessions and reflections and plenty of time to socialize and renew friendships. After the sessions are over, we will have lunch. Do come join, if you are able to.

**Thanksgiving Day Mass Collection:** The collection amounted to \$856. Thank you for your generous donations. It is being sent to "Cross Catholic Outreach," a Catholic charitable organization ministry that "partners with bishops, priests, religious and lay workers to provide food, water, housing, education, orphan support, medical care, microenterprise and disaster relief---and the love of our Lord Jesus Christ---to the poorest of the poor in over 30 countries around the world." The past two years, we had donated the Thanksgiving Day Mass collection to St. Anthony's Dining Room in SF and Catholic Relief Services.

**Parish Advent Confessions:** On Saturday, December 17 at 10:30a.m. as a way of preparing ourselves for Christmas.

**Simbang Gabi Masses:** At the regular 8:30a.m. Masses from December 16 through 24, Simbang Gabi tradition will be followed. Do come join! As we will be busy with the external preparations such as gift-buying, decorations, food, etc., it would be highly beneficial to prepare ourselves internally, spiritually, for the Birth of Christ at Christmas. I'd like to thank all those who have begun the preparations for making this tradition a success in our parish as in the past.

**Christmas Mass Schedule:** Christmas Eve December 24 Mass at 4:30 p.m. Christmas Day December 25 Masses at 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. My Christmas letter to the whole parish will be in the mail in the next few days.

**A Story to Think About: The Contented Fisherman:** The industrialist was horrified to find the fisherman lying beside his boat, smoking a pipe. "Why aren't you out fishing?" said the industrialist. "Because I have caught enough fish for the day." "Why don't you catch some more?" "What would I do with it?" "Earn more money. Then you could have a motor fixed to your boat and go into deeper waters and catch more fish. That would bring you money to buy nylon nets, so more fish, more money. Soon you would have enough to buy two boats... even a fleet of boats. Then you could be rich like me." "What would I do then?" "Then you could really enjoy life." "What do you think I am doing now?" Which would you rather have: a fortune or a capacity for enjoyment? (ADM).

**Religious Humor:**

1. Laughing in Heaven: Q. How can you make God laugh? A. Tell him your plans.
2. Adam's Shorts: Six-year-old Ned's mother was looking through an old family Bible when an oak leaf fell out. Ned said, "I guess that must be Adam's shorts."
3. Father Time: The last time we changed from daylight saving time, a preacher friend posted, "For those who habitually show up 15 minutes late to church, allow me to remind you that tonight is the night you set your clock back 45 minutes."
4. Hearing: "What's wrong, Bubba?" asked the pastor. "I need you to pray for my hearing," said Bubba. The pastor put his hands on Bubba's ears and prayed. When he was done, he asked, "So how's your hearing?" "I don't know," said Bubba. "It isn't until next Tuesday."
5. God is Watching: A boy walked into a Christian school cafeteria and there on the table was a plate of fruit. Next to it was a sign that said "Take one. God is watching." Next to the fruit was a plate of cookies, which had a sign next to it, written by a fellow student, that said "Take as many as you want. God is watching the fruit."

**Wishing you a grace-filled Season of Advent with great expectations,**

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota