

# From the Pastor's Desktop

## A Message from Father Charles Puthota



December 11, 2022

Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

**Gaudete Sunday of Advent:** We are at the Third Sunday of Advent, also called Gaudete (Rejoice) Sunday. Usually, rose-colored vestments are worn by the priest. The readings, especially the one from Isaiah, point to the invitation to rejoicing. Looking to the most auspicious and life-giving birth of Christ, we begin to rejoice. This process of rejoicing will culminate at Christmas time and spread throughout the Christmas season. The Advent season is going forward as it invites us to the person of Christ. The advent is about the advent of Christ. It's all about his coming into our lives. His coming is a dynamic reality, in that it happens as life happens for us. We are not the same as we were before. Our pilgrimage of life progresses with all sorts of new experiences of joy and struggle. In our current situation, Jesus meets us; he joins our journey; he walks with us and talks with us. He engages us wherever we are in our life-situations. Jesus Christ is ever ancient, ever new. Even as he changed to become a human person, he changes himself, adapts himself, incarnates himself, into our human situations. In joy, he rejoices with us. In our sorrows, he weeps with us. In our fears, he comforts us. In our despair, he hopes with us. While we anchor ourselves to Jesus Christ the Son of God, we know that Jesus is ever human, ever fresh, ever new, ever adaptable so that he can constantly capture our imagination and appeal to our deep desires and dreams, our laughter and longings. This is my personal prayer for you and me: **"Jesus, come meet me where I'm at this juncture of my life. Speak to me to my present needs. Heal me as I carry the burdens of my illnesses. Save me from myself and my loneliness and sadness. Touch me with your grace. Make my humdrum life shine with your love."**

**Advent Quotes:** "You keep us waiting. You, the God of all time, want us to wait. For the right time in which to discover who we are, where we are to go, who will be with us, and what we must do. So thank you ... for the waiting time." --- John Bell. "Christmas is fast approaching. And now that Christ has aroused our seasonal expectations, he'll soon fulfill them all!" --- St. Augustine. "God is coming! God is coming! All the element we swim in, this existence, echoes ahead the advent. God is coming! Can't you feel it?" --- Walter Wangerin, Jr

**Parish Advent Retreat on Tuesday, December 13:** Please be in touch with the parish office for the update on this event. The plan: 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.

**Parish Advent Confessions:** On Saturday, December 17 at 10:30a.m. as a way of preparing ourselves spiritually and internally 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 4:30p.m. Christmas Day December 25 Masses at 9:30a.m. and 11:00a.m. My Christmas letter to the whole parish will be in the mail in the next few days.

**New Year Mass Schedule:** Saturday, December 31 at 4:30p.m. and Sunday, January 01 at 9:30a.m.

**A Story to Think About: Confucius the Sage:** Pu Shang once said to Confucius, "What kind of sage are you that you can say that Yen Hui excels you in straightforwardness? That in clarifying things Tuan-mu Tz'u is superior to you? That Chung Yu is more courageous than you? And that Chuan-sun is more dignified than you?" In his eagerness to get a reply Pu Shang moved to the edge of the mat and nearly fell off it. "If these things' are true," he said, "then why are these four men your disciples?" Confucius replied, "Stay right where you are and I shall tell you. Yen Hui knows how to be straight-forward, but he does not know how to be flexible, Tuan-mu Tz'u knows how to clarify things, but he does not know how to give a simple Yes or No for answer. Chung Yu knows how to be courageous, but he does not know how to be cautious. Chuan-sun Shih knows how to be dignified, but he does not know how to be, unassuming. This is why these four men are glad to study under me." Jalal-ud-din Rumi says, "A hand that is always open or always closed is a crippled hand. A bird that cannot open and close its wings cannot fly." (ADM;TSOTB)

**Humor:**

1. What's the difference between in-laws and outlaws? Outlaws are wanted.
2. Einstein's mom: Are you happy? Einstein: Relatively.
3. Describe yourself in three words. Lazy.
4. Where there's a will, there's a relative.
5. A plateau is the highest form of flattery.
6. What's the difference between ignorance and apathy? I don't know and I don't care.
7. "I'm sorry" and "I apologize" mean the same thing --- unless you're at a funeral.
8. "I stand corrected," said the man in the orthopedic shoes.
9. It's difficult explaining puns to kleptomaniacs --- they're always taking things literally.
10. I went on a once-in-a-lifetime holiday. Never again.

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

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota