

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota



December 18, 2022

Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Advent: We are at the fourth Sunday of Advent. This is the Sunday before Christmas, which falls this year on a Sunday. That Jesus is coming into our lives all over again in fresh new ways and meeting us where we are on the journey of life is at the heart of this Advent season. Coming is a concept that is dynamic, not static. It's active, alive, with movement and dynamism. It's like the difference between static water and running water. The running water of the river flows, bringing new life all around, with fruit and medicinal trees. Jesus' coming has such power, newness, fullness, and healing in our lives. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus said: "You never step into the same river twice." With the river constantly flowing, it's always a new river. Jesus coming into our lives has the same qualities. Our lives are flowing like the river, changing, transforming, and developing. We are in flux! Jesus steps into our lives, not like he did yesterday or in the past anytime, but he enters our lives today. He knows our changed circumstances and struggles. He speaks to where we are now. He meets us and upholds us and graces us as he finds us now. That's why this Advent we can let him into our lives with joyful abandon so he can bring about the magic only he can.

Faith Formation Families at Last Sunday Mass: Our Faith Formation (formerly CCD) children were present last Sunday, December 11, at the 9:30a.m. Mass wearing Santa's hat and participating in the various parts of the Mass. At the end of the Mass, they sang Christmas carols. I would like to express my joy and gratitude to the children and their families for their participation. Also, my special thanks to Laurrie Digneo, Patti, Spiteri, and the dedicated catechists.

Parish Advent Retreat on Tuesday December 13: A group of 35 people attended this retreat that I preached. The theme of the retreat was: "To Know Jesus, To Love Jesus, and To Follow Jesus." The Retreat started with the 8:30a.m. Mass followed by arroz caldo, croissants, coffee, and fruits. We sang hymns at the beginning and end of each session. There was plenty of time to socialize and renew friendships. After the sessions were over, we had Chinese food for lunch. Thanks for all those who attended this retreat. Also, thanks to all the volunteers who put in so much work to make this spiritual event a success.

Over 50 Club and Italian Catholic Federation (ICF): On Friday, December 09, there was a Christmas luncheon of Over 50 Club at the Basque Cultural Center. It was well-attended and the room was packed with people. I would like to thank the organizers for this event and for their regular meetings in Cantwell Hall on Thursdays. Our social events are very important, and they serve to bring people together and keep the blues of loneliness away. Also, the ICF Christmas luncheon was held at the Basque on Friday, December 16. Thank you, Eva and Mary Perata and your team for putting on this enjoyable event.

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 is in the mail already.

New Year Mass Schedule: Saturday, January 31 Vigil Mass at 4:30p.m. Sunday, January 1 Mass at 9:30a.m.

A Story to Ponder: Change the World by Changing Me: The Sufi Bayazid says this about himself; “I was a revolutionary when I was young and a/l my prayer to God was: ‘Lord give me the energy to change the world. “As I approached middle age and realized that half my life was gone without my changing a single soul, I changed my prayer to: ‘Lord, give me the grace to change all those who come in contact with me. Just my family and friends, and I shall be content, ‘Now that I am an old man and my days are numbered, my one prayer is, Lord, give me the grace to change myself. ’ If I had prayed for this right from the start I should not have wasted my life.” (ADM; TSOTB)

Advent / Christmas Humor: A little girl was pushing the limits of her mother’s very last nerve. Mom was nearing the end of a hectic season of cooking, cleaning, shopping, wrapping and church stuff. She was also nearing the breaking point with her little pre-schooler. Finally, the little girl was bathed and ready for bed. As she knelt to say her prayers, Mom listened as her sweet three-year-old theologian “customized” her evening prayer, “... And forgive us our Christmases, as we forgive those who Christmas against us!”

Humorous Church Signs:

1. “Get in touch with God by knee mail.”
2. “Whoever stole our AC units keep one. It’s hot where you’re going.”
3. “Be the kind of person your pet thinks you are.”
4. “Honk if you love Jesus. Text while driving if you want to meet him.”
5. “God prefers kind atheists over hateful Christians.”
6. “Catch up with Jesus. Lettuce praise & Relish him. ‘Cuz he loves me from my head to-ma-toes.”
7. “Forgive your enemies ---It Messes with their heads.”
8. God expects spiritual fruit, not religious nuts.”
9. “Tweet others as you would like to be tweeted.”
10. “Having trouble sleeping? Try one of our sermons.”

Hope you are having a happy, holy, and fun-filled Advent Season with family and friends, looking eagerly forward to the birth of Christ in our minds and hearts,

Your Friend and Pastor,
Father Charles Puthota