

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from the Pastor for the New Year 2023



January 1, 2023

Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

In the New Year, Do One Tick at a Time

The clock master was about to fix the pendulum of a clock when, to his surprise, he heard the pendulum speak.

“Please, sir, leave me alone,” the pendulum pleaded. “It will be an act of kindness on your part. Think of the number of times I will have to tick day and night. So many times each minute, sixty minutes an hour, twenty-four hours a day, three hundred and sixty-five days a year. For year upon year.... Millions of ticks. I could never do it.”

But the clock master answered wisely, “Don’t think of the future. Just do one tick at a time and you will enjoy every tick for the rest of your life.” And that is exactly what the pendulum decided to do. It is still ticking merrily away. (*The Prayer of the Frog, Vol. II*)

Reflection: We have rung down the curtain on 2022 and rung in the New Year 2023. We would like to say “thanks” to all that has been and “yes” to all that shall be. God in Jesus has been with us in 2022 in small and big things that came our way. When we thought we couldn’t take another step, he was by our side, leading the way, gracing our moments, and filling us with hope. Through the mists of grief and sorrow, disease and death, his presence shone through. When we felt happy and successful, too, his presence filled us, showing that all blessings come down from his loving hands.

We begin the New Year with hope and optimism. We may have a tendency to carry the sad and bad things that happened in 2022 over to 2023. We may have been hurt or disappointed or shocked by what may have happened to us. Sometimes, our choices may have led to consequences we regretted or loathed. At other times, our lives may have veered off into a weary, loveless, joyless, and humdrum life. We have to be mindful about not carrying baggage from last year into the New Year. Also, there is a possibility that we could be suffering from nostalgia for the good and beautiful things that came our way in 2022. This could lead us to an idol worship of the memorable things of the past, with the result that we are unable to welcome the present with fresh eyes, open arms, and hopeful hearts.

Of course, we worry and fret about how this year will turn out to be. What good things are we going to encounter this New Year? What sad things are going to happen to us? However, let us not strive to see the distant scene. Let us not be overwhelmed by what we have to do or how we must cope with the challenges and ordeals of life. All we have to do is to take one moment at a time: pack that moment with as much love and energy as possible. There may be setbacks and heartaches, but even those will become moments laden with grace and faith. Let’s meet each person as if he or she were the only one in this world. Let’s deal with the task at hand as if it were the only thing to be done in the world. Let’s live in love in the present moment. The present moment is where God meets us because our God is the God of the present. Remember the saying: “Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift -- that’s why we call it the present.” Let us do one tick at a time. We’ll tick merrily away the whole year of 2023 and beyond!

Action: Embrace the New Year by trying to shake off sadness or nostalgia for things past. Look at and relate to people without paying attention to their past --- as if you were meeting them for the first ever time. The past interferes too much in our present and ruins our future. Bring a fresh and unsullied outlook on people and circumstances. Here's a person in front of you, full of possibilities; here is a situation calling for your resourceful and positive approach. That person's past is gone; the future doesn't still exist. This situation or event in this particular form at this particular moment has never existed in your life before. Meet that person or situation here and now. Bring all your loving, creative, energetic, and positive resources to address this situation. Easier said than done; but you need to keep striving. There is nothing that you and God together cannot handle.

Happy New Year! Feliz año nuevo! Maligayang Bagong Taon! Felice anno nuovo! Is-sena it-tajba! Athbhliain faoi mhaise daoibh! Urte berri on! Feliz Ano Novo! Bonne année ! !

Your Friend and Pastor,

Fr. Charles Puthota