

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from the Pastor

January 29, 2023



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Moveable Feasts in 2023: The Christmas season was officially and liturgically over with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord on January 09th. We are now in a brief "Ordinary Time." Then we will start the Lenten Season with Ash Wednesday on February 22. Palm Sunday falls on April 02. The Holy Week will see us celebrating the holy events of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. April 09 is Easter Sunday. May 21 is the Ascension of the Lord. Pentecost Sunday is May 28. The Ordinary Time will begin on May 29. Trinity Sunday is June 04. The feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ is on June 11. The Ordinary Time will go on until we begin a whole new Advent Season on December 03 with the first Sunday of Advent.

As the seasons of nature repeat one after another, the seasons of the liturgical events celebrating God's mysterious repeat one after another. Each year, as we go through the cyclical seasons, we are given opportunities after opportunities, reminders after reminders, inspirations after inspirations, awakenings after awakenings --- to grapple with God's presence and love in our lives. God's mysteries are profound and far-reaching. We may be preoccupied with things that can shut us out of the deeper awareness of God's working in our lives. That is why we need seasons after seasons to help us go just a little bit deeper into the heart of God. That is why we need each year the events of the life of Christ that parallel our lives. Not only do they parallel our lives, the mysteries of Christ's life converge on our lives. Then we'll know, like St. Paul, that "it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me."

The Word of God: The Sermon on the Mount starting with the Beatitudes: As you know, the Sermon on the Mount is a collection of the central teachings of Jesus found in Matthew's Gospel chapters 5, 6, and 7. If we want to know what Jesus teaches and would like to take a quick look at them, we need to go to these three chapters. The scripture scholars tell us that this is how Jesus used to teach. The Sermon on the Mount begins with the Beatitudes. These are the "attitudes-to-be." Before we can do anything, we have to be. The world is too preoccupied with action and perhaps too little with the inner source of our being; too much action springing from too little soulfulness. The Beatitudes bring us to who we are to be, what our attitudes have to be, what our inner disposition and motivation have to be, before we can translate them into deeds.

We Christians rightly appreciate the Ten Commandments. But as you know, the Ten Commandments are from the Old Testament. When we come to the New Testament, Jesus fulfills the Ten Commandments by giving us the Beatitudes. If we are to be happy, there's one clear way: the Beatitudes of Jesus. Not easy to follow though. Because our upbringing and culture may have conditioned us to certain attitudes that are opposed to Jesus' attitudes --- the Beatitudes --- which Jesus wants us to follow, if we have to be his disciples. So let's take a closer look at the Beatitudes and meditate on them. For example, Blessed are the poor in spirit means that we are not dependent on all the things that the world offers; rather our happiness comes from being dependent on God who alone can truly fulfill us and lead us to the purpose and goal of our life. In my opinion, if we want to post any biblical code of ethics or laws or commandments in our Court Houses and City Halls, it should really be the Beatitudes of Jesus. They enshrine the mind and heart of Jesus and impel us to embrace the authentic Christianity in all its glory and majesty, in its humility and simplicity.

Think About It: Love's Forgetfulness: "Why do you keep talking about my past mistakes?" said the husband. "I thought you had forgiven and forgotten." "I have, indeed," said the wife. "But don't you ever forget that I have forgiven and forgotten." Sinner: "Remember not my sins, oh Lord!" Lord: "What sins? I forgot them long ago. You'll have to prod my memory. Love keeps no record of wrongs." (1 Cor. 13) (ADM)

A Spiritual Story: The great Buddhist saint Nagarjuna moved around wearing only a loincloth and, incongruously, a golden begging bowl gifted to him by the King, who was his disciple. One night he was about to lie down to sleep among the ruins of an ancient monastery when he noticed a thief lurking behind one of the columns. "Here, take this," said Nagarjuna, holding the begging bowl. "That way you won't disturb me once I have fallen asleep." The thief eagerly grabbed the bowl and made off --- only to return the next morning with the bowl and a request: "When you gave away this bowl so freely last night, you made me feel very poor. Teach me how to acquire the riches that make this kind of lighthearted detachment possible." (ADM)

Pope Francis Quote: "How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure but it is news when the stock market loses two points?"

All 26 Letters of English in the shortest sentence: Pack my box with five dozen liquor jugs.

The Shortest Horror Story: The last man on Earth sat alone in a room. There was a knock on the door.

Your Friend and Pastor,

Fr. Charles Puthota