

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

June 25, 2023



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Summer Cold Weather in San Francisco: As you know, June 21 is the summer solstice, the longest day and shortest night in the Northern Hemisphere. Stonehenge in Southwest England was built around 2500 BC to mark the occasion of yearly summer and winter solstices. It is officially the first day of summer. The summer season is upon us! In San Francisco, though, June, July, and August tend to see a lot of fog. No wonder, Mark Twain said: "The coldest winter I ever spent was a summer in San Francisco." The Bay Area is tucked right between the Pacific Ocean and the Central Valley. To the east of San Francisco, heat in the valley creates thinner air and low pressure. The valley becomes like a vacuum that wants to be filled by the heavier marine layer. It pulls that layer over San Francisco, which makes the city cooler than other parts of California or the United States in the summer. Either that, or God left the refrigerator door open!

A Beautiful Prayer: I quoted this prayer in one of my daily Masses recently. At the request of a parishioner who found this prayer comforting and inspirational, I'm providing it here. Enjoy! *I asked God for health that I might do great things, but I was given infirmity that I might do better things. I asked for riches that I might be happy, but I was given poverty that I might be wise. I asked for power that I might have the praise of people, but I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God. I got nothing I asked for, but everything I had hoped for. Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered. I am, among all people, most richly blessed.*

Word of God – 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time: Through all our trials, despite all our sufferings and agonies, we shall prevail because God is upholding us, protecting us, and guiding us because of his love and providence. This theme comes through the readings this Sunday. In the first reading from Jeremiah, the prophet is anguished about the opposition and treachery he faces but he places his trust in God "for he has rescued the life of the poor from the power of the wicked." In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus assures us that we should not be afraid because we are "worth more than many sparrows." Not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father's knowledge. All the hairs of our heads are counted. Let's put our hands in the hand of God and pick our way forward without fear but full of faith, trust, and confidence.

From the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: Why does man have a desire for God? God himself, in creating man in his own image, has written upon his heart the desire to see him. Even if this desire is often ignored, God never ceases to draw man to himself because only in God will he find and live the fullness of truth and happiness for which he never stops searching. By nature and by vocation, therefore, man is a religious being, capable of entering into communion with God. This intimate and vital bond with God confers on man his fundamental dignity. **How is it possible to know God with only the light of human reason?** Starting from creation, that is from the world and from the human person, through reason alone one can know God with certainty as the origin and end of the universe, as the highest good and as infinite truth and beauty.

Recommending a Piece of Classical Music: Here's a hauntingly beautiful piece of music, one of my favorite ones. Music like this can bring beauty into our life and also help calm the mind and relax the nerves. Enjoy! YouTube would be one of the places where you can easily find it. **Il Carnevale di Venezia** ("The Carnival of Venice") is based on a Neapolitan folk tune called "O Mamma, Mamma Cara" and popularized by the Italian violinist and composer Niccolo Paganini, who wrote twenty variations on the original tune. He titled it "Il Carnevale Di Venezia," Op. 10. In 1829, he wrote to a friend, "The variations I've composed on the graceful Neapolitan ditty, 'O Mamma, Mamma Cara,' outshine everything. I can't describe it." As I listen to Paganini's masterpiece, one of the things that fascinates me is that one piece of music could be looked at and rendered in 20 different ways. It speaks not only for the creativity of Paganini but also for the insight that reality is complex, multifarious, and multi-dimensional. There is not just one way of looking at life. We could cultivate a sense of awe at people, events, and life in general because everyone and everything has rich and complex existence.

A Story to Think About: Stand Up and Be Counted: When Krushchev pronounced his famous denunciation of Stalin, someone in the Congress Hall is reported to have said, "Where were you. Comrade Krushchev, when all those innocent people were being slaughtered?" Krushchev paused, looked round the Hall, and said, "Will the person who said that kindly stand up!" Tension mounted in the Hall. No one moved. Said Krushchev, "Well, whoever you are, you have your answer now. I was in exactly the same position then as you find yourself in now."

Humor: 1. Delivering a speech at a banquet on the night of his arrival in a large city, a visiting priest told several anecdotes he expected to repeat at meetings the next day. Because he wanted to use the jokes again, he requested the reporters to omit them from any accounts they might turn in to their newspapers. A cub reporter, in commenting on the speech, ended his piece with the following: "The priest told a number of stories that cannot be published." 2. Q: Why did Moses wander in the desert for 40 years? A: Even then men wouldn't ask for directions! 3. Doctor: "Your recovery was a miracle!" Patient: "Praise God. Now I don't have to pay you!"

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota