

# From the Pastor's Desktop

## A Message from Father Charles Puthota

October 29, 2023



**Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,**

**Feast of All Saints, Wednesday November 01, A Holy Day of Obligation, Masses at 8.30 a.m. and**

**6.00 p.m.:** November dawns with this glorious feast of all saints. We have the celebration of saints throughout the liturgical calendar. These are canonized saints of the Church. They lived lives of heroic virtue and holiness. After a process of analysis and careful study, the Church determined, in many cases centuries after the death of these men and women, that they were worthy to join the long list of saints. However, there are millions and millions more who have reached the beatific vision. These too have joined the ranks of saints in heaven, even though we don't recognize them formally and individually on the liturgical calendar. Today is the day to celebrate them all. In our own lifetime, we have met people who stood out for their selflessness and saintliness. Among those might be our parents, other family members, and friends. We celebrate them all today with joy and gratitude. What can we take away from this feast? That we are all called to be holy; that each one of us is called to be a saint. Most saints looked at the saints before them and said, if they could do it, why not I? That is the same question we would do well to ask. If all those saints could give of themselves to God and others, why can't I? If those saints, men and women, married and single, could respond to the call of Christ in their times and circumstances, why not we in our times and situations? Here's a scripture passage that reminds us of all saints: "After this I had a vision of a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue. They stood before the throne and before the Lamb, wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands.... [One of the elders] said to me, 'These are the ones who have survived the time of great distress; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb'" (Revelation 7:9,14).

**Thursday, November 02, All Souls Day---The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed:**

When November comes, we turn our attention in a special way to those who have gone before us. We loved them in life, we love them in death, and we'll love them into eternal life. Life is not ended in death but only changed. Even as the seed has to die in order to bring forth new life, all our lives when they end in death come back into life because we are destined for eternity. We are mortal in the sense of our fleeting life on earth, but we are immortal in the sense of our life with God. It is our belief that we the "Church Militant" can really help the "Church Suffering" through our love and prayers. When they become the "Church Triumphant," they who will be close to God can intercede for us who are in this "vale of tears." In other words, all these traditional theological terms express a simple truth: that life continues after death, love is everlasting because God is love. Our human love is purified and perfected by God's love because all our love has God's love as its origin and destination. This month of November, as we specially remember the dear departed, as we pray for them in a very special, even emotional way, as we visit their graves and place flowers over them, let our hearts keep chanting this simple prayer: "Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen."

**Pastor's Mass and Luncheon for Over 50 Club:** In a first for St. Elizabeth Parish, I celebrated Mass for Over 50 Club in Cantwell Hall and hosted a delicious catered luncheon. In my homily to them at Mass, I expressed my gratitude to them for gathering week after week and encouraged them to join the weekly Masses, and highlighted the Catholic insights about God's love, faith, and service. There was a great spirit of friendship and conviviality. After the luncheon, everyone enjoyed Bingo. I assured them that this event would be added to our parish annual calendar.

**The Synod on Syndality:** The first session comes to a close this Sunday, October 29. Let's wait for the insights to be shared as a way of moving forward and waiting for the concluding second session in October 2024.

**Word of God---Love of God and Love of Neighbor:** The gospel this 30<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time is probably one of the top three most consequential passages in the whole Bible. It's about love. Love is the summary of our life. Love is the essence, purpose, orientation, basis, foundation, direction of our life. We may have everything, but if we don't have love, we are nothing! Jesus' genius is in bringing the two Old Testament laws together and making them on par with each other. The old Deuteronomy 6:4 verse about loving God with all one's heart (Shema Israel) is brought together with the somewhat not so popular verse from Leviticus 19:18 about love of neighbor. Jesus' vision is that the love of God expresses itself in love of neighbor and if one genuinely loves neighbor, that person has love of God already in one's soul. Loving God and loving others is what life is all about. If we do this journey well, we will be well on the way to happiness and fulfillment, despite all sorts of odds and struggles in life. Justice is an expression of love of others, which is highlighted in the first reading from Exodus in which God has preferential love for the poor and the oppressed and that the chosen people of God have to pay close attention to practicing love, especially toward those who are on the margins and peripheries.

**Humor:** 1. A heavy snowstorm closed the schools in one town. When the children returned to school a few days later, one grade-school teacher asked her students whether they had used the time away from school constructively. "I sure did, teacher," one girl replied. "I just prayed for more snow." 2. A five-year-old's version of John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have ever-*laughing* life."

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota