

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

December 10, 2023



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Advent: The word "advent" itself means "coming" or "arrival." It is obviously about the coming of Jesus. Remember the words of Jesus before his ascension into heaven: "I'll be with you always." Jesus is with us always. Only we do not see and recognize him. We do not hear and touch him. We can imagine him saying: "You have eyes, but you don't see; have ears, but don't hear." There are many things in life that prevent us from being in touch with Jesus. Our preoccupations and anxieties may leave us with no time or space for Jesus in our lives. That is why the concept of "coming" is very helpful. It has the sense of dynamism built into it. It has the meaning that it is happening in our lives now, in our present situations and circumstances. It's not about the past or the future so much as it is about how Jesus is coming into our lives now, encountering us, calling us, sending us, fulfilling us, and blessing us. As we go about our daily, ordinary lives, how can we prepare ourselves in our minds and hearts for his coming? Or as we face difficult situations such as disease, death in the family, failure, rejection, depression, panic, and all sorts of sad experiences, how can we let Jesus come into our lives today so that he can make a difference and lift us up with his grace and love?

Advent Quotes: "Each of us is an innkeeper who decides if there is room for Jesus." --- Neal A. Maxwell. "Hope sees the invisible, feels the intangible, achieves the impossible." "Advent: Arrival, Start, Beginning, Dawn, Initiation, Introduction." "Advent: Close your eyes and open your mind." "Advent: the time to listen for footsteps --- you can't hear footsteps when you're running yourself." --- Bill McKibben. "The season of Advent means there is something on the horizon the likes of which we have never seen before. So stay. Sit. Linger. Tarry. Ponder. Wait. Behold. Wonder. There will be time enough for running." ---Jan Richardson. "Advent, like its cousin Lent, is a season for prayer and reformation of our hearts."--- Edward Hays.

Thank-You Note from Catholic Charities Hawaii for our Parish Gift: You may recall that in October, in the wake of the tragic Maui wildfires, our parish took up a second collection at the weekend Masses and I forwarded \$1,188.00 to the Catholic Charities Hawaii. They have sent me a letter, which, in part, reads: "Dear Fr. Charles, Mahalo for your gift of \$1,188 received on 10/31/2023 from St. Elizabeth Church to Catholic Charities Hawai'i Maui Relief Fund. Through your partnership, we are able to provide vital relief efforts in recovery through services such as financial assistance, mental health counseling, supporting those with the greatest need, and more.... On behalf of Catholic Charities Hawai'i and the people we serve, thank you for the impact your gift has allowed us to make. With your gift, we are able to help the people of Maui with the resources they need to overcome this tragedy and rebuild their lives. A sincere mahalo for your thoughts, prayers, and kokua as we navigate through this challenging time together." Letter signed by Kellie Schmidtke, Director, and Be-Jay Kodama, Vice-President.

Word of God, Second Sunday of Advent, Year B: “Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people” is the cry in Isaiah. God comforts, heals, and forgives. A voice cries out to prepare the way. Mountains will be made low, valleys shall be filled. Glad tidings will be spoken. God comes with power; like a shepherd he feeds the flock and gathers the lambs, carrying them in his bosom, leading them with care. In the gospel, too, there is a voice crying out in the wilderness, echoing the sentiments of Isaiah. This voice is John the Baptist’s, as he prepares the way for Jesus. He acknowledges his unworthiness before the Lord, the one mightier than John. He will baptize with the Holy Spirit. We could look into our hearts and minds and see how we can prepare ourselves and others for the coming of Jesus this season, how we can let him straighten the crooked paths and receive wholeheartedly the new and bold things he is willing to accomplish in our lives and the world.

ICF Christmas Luncheon: On December 1, our local ICF chapter met at the Basque Cultural Center for a Christmas luncheon. Thanks to Eva Perata, her sister Mary, Florence, and their team for arranging this gathering and the meal as we begin to look forward to the heartwarming season of Advent and Christmas. Such events help put the spirit of Christmas in the air.

Simbang Gabi Masses at 8:30 a.m. from Dec. 16 through Dec. 24: We will have the Simbang Gabi related ceremonies and prayers at the daily Mass at 8:30 a.m. On the two Sundays December 17 and 24, Simbang Gabi will be combined with the 10:30 a.m. Masses. I would like to encourage everyone, especially the Filipino community, to come together for this beautiful devotional preparation for nine days before Christmas. The contact person for Simbang Gabi this year is Gloria Trinidad, who will be assisted by May Devera and Beth Pasco. Please do let them know how you would like to participate, support and sponsor Simbang Gabi.

A Story to Ponder: When the young rabbi succeeded his father everyone began to tell him how completely unlike his father he was. “On the contrary,” replied the young man. “I’m exactly like the old man. He imitated no one. I imitate no one.” Be yourself! Beware of imitating the behavior of the great if you do not have the inner disposition that inspired them to act.

Humor: 1. My wife says I’m getting fatter, but in my defense, I’ve had a lot on my plate recently. 2. I’m so good at sleeping. I can do it with my eyes closed. 3. Why did it take so long for the pirates to learn the alphabet? They got stuck at C. 4. Why did the golfer bring two pairs of pants? In case he got a hole in one. 5. What did one plate whisper to the other plate? Dinner is on me. 6. What did one hat say to the other? You stay here. I’ll go on ahead. 7. Why did the scarecrow win an award? He was outstanding in his field. 8. How do you make an octopus laugh? With ten-tickles. 9. I know a lot of jokes about unemployed people but none of them work.

Christmas Mass Schedule: Christmas Eve December 24 at 4:30 p.m. Christmas Day December 25 at 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Wishing you a blessed season of Advent,

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota