

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

December 31, 2023



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

New Year 2024: As we are ready to welcome the brand new year 2024, let's place this whole new gift of time in God's hands. May the good Lord guide and protect us. May he make our lives shine. May he transform us into his channels of grace and love. Let bygones be bygones. Let's start anew and afresh to share our lives. We cannot allow pessimism or cynicism to taint the quality of life in the New Year. Let hope spring eternal in our hearts, motivating us to grapple with this new chunk of time with optimism and joy. If God is for us, who can be against us? Thanks to all that has been in 2023! Yes to all that shall be in 2024! As Moses says: "The Lord bless you and keep you! The Lord let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you! The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!" (Numbers 6: 24-26).

Thank You: The Advent Season, the Simbang Gabi Masses and Reception for nine days before Christmas and Christmas day itself went very well, thanks to the volunteers at our parish who gave so much of themselves joyfully. Especially the "Morning Worshippers" were most generously invested in the success of all our spiritual and social celebrations connected with this holy season. My heartfelt thanks to each and every one of them for making a success of these celebrations. We gave glory to God and served the parish community. I'm not only grateful but also proud of your active participation in the life of the parish. You help build up the family of God in our own parish and help further God's Kingdom. Maraming salamat po! Muchas gracias!

Sunday, December 31, Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph: Love God and love one another. This is the love commandment practiced wholeheartedly by the Holy Family. Family is the "school of love." What we do in family right from our earliest stages shapes the course of our life. The Holy Family made up of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph admirably loved God and loved one another. This family love led them outside of the family into the larger arena of life to love people--- and help and heal and transform the world. Joseph had to accept the divine promptings and take Mary into his home, a situation fraught with some uncertainty and confusion. Mary herself had to conceive the child by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. Not everything was crystal clear. Mary and Joseph had to pick their way with God's guidance and light. This Holy Family filled with God's blessings faced danger and vulnerability. They had to flee to another country in the face of death threats to the divine baby. Through it all, they were faithfully obedient to God's will and purpose. With Jesus in their house, God's blessings profoundly filled their lives. Jesus grew in wisdom and knowledge. When Jesus was lost on their pilgrimage to Jerusalem, they had to deal with anxiety and anguish. The Holy Family was not at all free from worry and sorrow and sadness. But they said yes to God's will generously, continuously, joyfully, and totally. The Holy Family is a perfect model for all families to live in love and trust and obedience; a model for us about to give and take; a shining example of simplicity and authenticity. They didn't have much in the material sense, but they were rich in love; they had everything needed to be the family God called them to be.

Monday, January 1, Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God: Not a Holy Day of Obligation this year. Parish Mass at 8:30 a.m. We begin a whole new year with the feast of Mary, the Mother of God. Let's entrust this year in the hands of the loving Mother. Elizabeth declares at the Visitation: "Most blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke 1:42-43). May this "mother of our Lord" look upon us always with the eyes of a loving and protecting mother. Let the new beginnings this year, perhaps with some new resolutions, be based on love that Mary the Mother of God began by becoming the Mother of the Son of God. Mary started a whole new beginning by bringing Jesus into the world and letting the Kingdom of God be manifested in Jesus like never before. Let the new year for us be a new, fresh start for what we could be and for what we could do for God and family and the world. Through the affection of Mary, the Mother of God, may we come closer to Christ our Lord and do whatever he tells us to do this new year of 2024.

Think About It: "Your future depends on a lot of things, but mostly on you."

New Year Humor: 1. "Hope you are not too exhausted from your yearly visit to the gym on New Year's Day." 2. "I don't need a New Year's resolution. You don't need that nonsense when you're perfect." 3. "I don't know what's so special about the New Year's Eve. I drop the ball at least once a day." 4. "A New Year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other." 5. Biggest joke of the century: "Computers and mobile were invented to save our time." 6. "Tell me a joke" --- "I don't think you'd understand a joke in my language. They are not so funny, anyway." 7. "Life is short. Smile while you still have teeth." 8. "I started thinking about the dangers of drinking on New Year's Eve. After that, I decided to stop thinking." 9. "If people could read my mind, I'd get punched in the face a lot." 10. "Of course, women don't work as hard as men. They get it right the first time."

An Irish Blessing for the New Year: "May God give you, for every storm, a rainbow; for every tear, a smile; for every care, a promise; a blessing in each trial; for every problem life sends, a faithful friend to share; for every sigh, a sweet song; and an answer for each prayer. Amen."

Wishing you a 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,

Father Charles Puthota